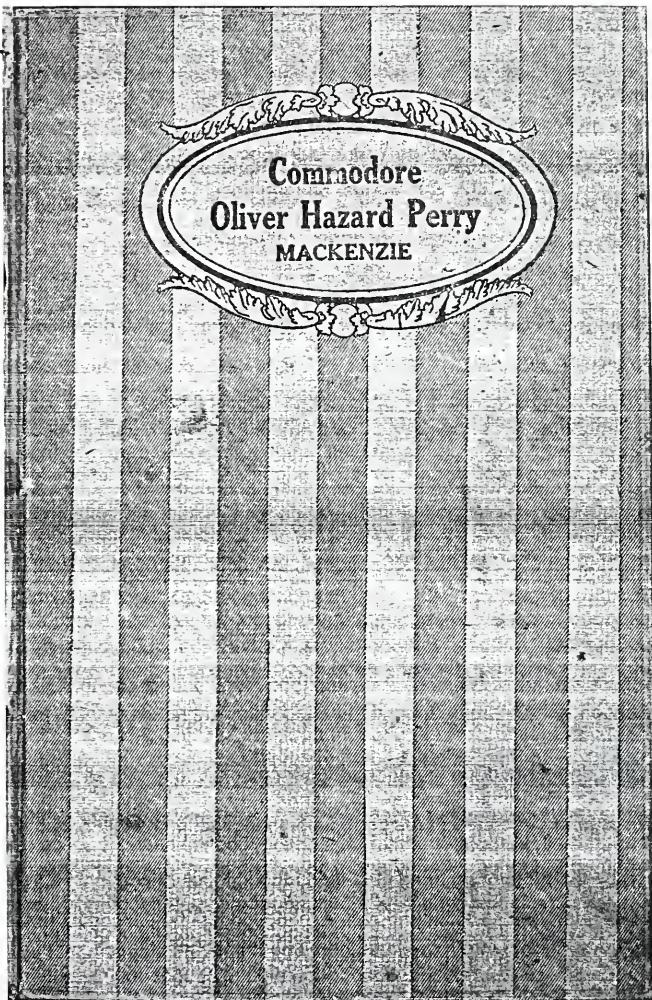


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**COMMODORE
OLIVER HAZARD PERRY**

Famous American Naval Hero

Victor of the

Battle of Lake Erie

His Life and Achievements

By

Alex. Slidell Mackenzie, U. S. N.

THE SUPERIOR PRINTING COMPANY

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OLIVER HAZARD PERRY

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.—Ancestors of Perry.—Emigration of Edmund Perry.—He settles in Plymouth.—Driven away by Religious Persecution.—Removes to Narragansett.—Account of Perry's Father.—He serves through the Revolutionary War.—Is captured.—Confined on board the Jersey.—Is released.—Recaptured.—Escapes.—Conclusion of War.—Becomes Master of a Merchantman.—Marries.—Birth of Oliver Hazard Perry.—Anecdotes of his Boyhood.—Is sent to School.—His various Teachers.—His Family settled in Newport.—Becomes a Pupil of Mr. Frazer.—Suffers from his Irascibility.—Firmness of Mrs. Perry.—He improves in his Studies.—Is taught Navigation.—Proves an apt Scholar.—Forms a taste for Reading.—French Aggressions on our Commerce.—Measures for its Protection.—Creation of a Navy.—Oliver's Father appointed Post-captain.—Builds the General Greene.—Oliver left in charge of the Family.—Conceives the idea of entering the Navy.—Gives reasons for his choice.

AMONG the noblest of a nation's possessions is the memory of her great men. In the lowest state of degradation to which a nation may be reduced by her own degenerate profligacy, or by external causes which she cannot control, the memory of her mighty dead serves to solace her regrets, and to stimulate the noblest of the living to imitate their example; to vindicate the fame and character of their country, and, haply, to restore its liberties. Greece, in the midst of all the humiliation to which she was reduced by her own degeneracy, or by the resistless energy and numbers of barbarian conquerors, urged on by religious fanaticism, could still exult in the recol-

lection of her past history, despite her conquerors, glory in her nationality, and find, in the memory of her Leonidas, Epaminondas, and Alcibiades, inspiration to fire the minds and nerve the arms of a Marco Botzaris and a Canaris.

Should America be also fated to know her season of decay, to sink under misfortune, and behold the extinction of her liberties, she may yet exult in the cherished memory of her patriots of other times, and find, in the inspiration of their example, worthy imitators of a Washington, a Franklin, a Warren, a Decatur, and a Perry. Her sages may well compare, for wisdom and virtue, with the wisest and most patriotic of other lands. Brief as is her history, and few as happily have been her wars, no country has produced heroes of a truer stamp. Among these, he whom we have last named lingers in the memory, surrounded with all the attributes that can adorn or give lustre to successful valour; with modesty, kindness, courtesy, chivalrous self-devotion, lively sympathies, and a generous humanity. To place the memory of Perry before his countrymen in a more complete and enduring form, to show him in his real character, to depict his virtues without concealing his faults, is the object of the following narrative.

Edmund Perry, the paternal ancestor of Oliver Hazard Perry in the fifth generation, and the first who emigrated to this country, was born in Devonshire, in England, about the year 1630. He was a gentleman of education and of considerable literary attainments. Being an influential member of the Society of Friends, and one of its public speakers, he became the subject of the persecution so rife during the domination of

Cromwell, especially against the Quakers, who, tampering with the army and preaching universal peace, seduced the military zealots from their duty, and bade fair thus to put an end to the dominion of the saints. This led to the emigration of Edmund Perry to Plymouth, in Massachusetts, about thirty years subsequent to the foundation of that colony.

The persecution, however, which had driven him from England, raged with equal inveteracy in the colony in which he had taken refuge, though founded by those who had fled, like himself, in search of religious liberty. In order to be able to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, he was compelled to remove farther from the haunts of civilized man; and at length, with others of his persuasion, found a resting-place in South Kingston, on the waters of Narragansett Bay, where they form their junction with Long Island Sound and the Atlantic, encircling the beautiful promontory which is also called by the name of Narragansett.

A more tolerant spirit existed in the colony of Rhode Island than its neighbor of Massachusetts Bay, by the persecuted of which it was chiefly settled. At any rate, there were none but Indians to disturb the emigrant in the possession of an estate which had been amicably acquired by purchase, and which continued in possession of the family at the birth of the subject of this narrative. The treatment of the Indians in this settlement was kind and conciliatory. Their descendants still continue to exist there in a civilized state; and it may be here mentioned as a remarkable fact, that one of them fell on Lake Erie on board the Lawrence.

Freeman Perry, great-grandson of Edmund Perry, and grandfather of Oliver Hazard Perry, was born on the second of February, 1732, and at the age of twenty-four married the daughter of Oliver Hazard, a descendant of one of the original Quaker settlers of Narragansett, whose brother held the station of lieutenant-governor of the colony. Oliver Hazard was a gentleman of large property, elegant manners, and cultivated tastes. The state of society in Rhode Island in those time not a little resembled that of Virginia. The cultivation of the soil was then performed by slaves, and commerce had introduced wealth, with its consequent luxuries and refinements. Freeman Perry was educated to the legal profession, in which he acquired distinction, filling, in a creditable manner, various offices of trust, such as member of the colonial Assembly, and judge of the court of Common Pleas.

The third son of this gentleman, called Christopher Raymond, father of the subject of this biography, was born on the fourth of December, 1761. Notwithstanding his early age when the revolution broke out, he was engaged throughout nearly the whole of the war in fighting the battles of his country, both by sea and land. After serving for a time in a corps of volunteers raised in Narragansett, called the Kingston Reds, he entered before the mast in a privateer commanded by a Captain Reed, and, on the termination of the cruise, made a second in the Mifflin, commanded by George Wait Babcock. In the course of this last cruise he was captured and taken into New-York, where he was confined for three months on board the Jersey prison-ship, subject to many miseries, occasioned by the disproportionate numbers that were crowded together in

a small space, the loathsome filth in which they existed, the unwholesomeness and insufficiency of the food, and all the studied barbarities by which Britons sought to punish their fellow-subjects of the New World for cherishing the love of freedom, and defending the liberties which were part of their birthright as descendants of Englishmen. Near the Wallabout, in Brooklyn, is a monument, erected over the remains of ten thousand Americans, victims of the systematic cruelty of British prison-ships.

Christopher Raymond Perry was among the small number of those who escaped to recount the horrible story of British captivity on board the Jersey. He came forth, however, the emaciated victim of the contagion which reigned within that abode of horror. But his zeal in behalf of liberty, and his resentment against England, were only quickened into fresh intensity by the treatment which he had received. So soon as his health was restored, he entered on board the U. S. ship Trumbull, commanded by Captain James Nicholson, and was on board that ship during her memorable combat with the Watt, a British letter of marque of greatly superior force. After an action of two hours and a half, during which the Trumbull had thirty-nine men killed and wounded, the English ship almost entirely ceased firing, and gave indications of an intention to surrender. Unfortunately, at this conjuncture, the topmasts of the Trumbull, which were badly wounded by the enemy's lofty firing, went over the side, when the latter, having lost no fewer than ninety-two men killed and wounded, was happy to escape. This action was considered one of the severest of the Revolution.

Subsequently to this cruise, young Perry entered on board a privateer, bound on a cruise on the enemy's own coast. He was, however, again captured, and confined in prison in Ireland during eighteen months, at the end of which time he effected his escape; and, having passed in a British vessel to the island of St. Thomas in the character of a British seaman, took passage from thence to Charleston, where he arrived after the conclusion of the war in 1783.

Perry continued to devote himself to the profession of the sea, and made a voyage to Ireland as mate of a merchantman. Among the passengers on the return voyage to the port of Philadelphia was a lady, born in Ireland, but of Scotch extraction, by the name of Sarah Alexander. The acquaintance thus begun on the ocean subsequently ripened into a strong attachment, and a year after, being in October, 1784, Christopher Raymond having risen to command, though as yet only twenty-three years of age, he found himself in a situation to marry; and, having previously had the fortune to win the consent of Miss Alexander, they were married in Philadelphia. They forthwith removed to South Kingston, where the young and uncommonly handsome couple was received with joyous celebrations by Perry's extensive family circle, and particularly by his maternal grandfather, the venerable Oliver Hazard, whose courteous and graceful demeanor impressed the bride most favourably as to the associates among whom her lot was now cast so far from her home.

The young couple became domesticated with Judge Perry, the captain's father, who resided on a farm of near two hundred acres, which had been in possession

of his family since the settlement of the country. The old homestead stood at the base of a hill, which commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country, interspersed in many directions by picturesque lakes—one of them, called Point Judith Pond, being beautifully dotted by green islands—and bounded, by the irregular winding of the coast, with the waters of Narragansett, separating it from the opposite shores of Rhode Island, while far in the southern distance spread the broad Atlantic. The old postroad between New-York and Boston, which, in the earlier days of the colonies, followed the circuitous line of the coast, out of the reach of Indian depredations passed at a short distance in front of the house; while in a picturesque and retired nook near an adjoining wood stood the family burying-ground, within which several generations had already been interred. Ere Captain Perry again resumed his profession, making voyages to many lands, the young couple continued for a season in this pleasing retirement, to enjoy together the sweets of domestic happiness. As the mother's character so sensibly affects that of the children, it may not be amiss here to say that Mrs. Perry was exceedingly intelligent and well-informed, and that, to a considerable share of personal attraction and a persuasive gentleness of demeanor, she added a degree of force of mind and energy of character not often found in her own sex, and seldom equalled in ours.

Their first child, Oliver Hazard Perry, was born on the twenty-third of August, 1785. His great-grandfather, Oliver Hazard, having died shortly before the birth of this child, and his uncle, Oliver Hazard Perry, being lost at sea on his passage from South Carolina

about the same time, the boy was, at the request of his grandmother, named after her father and son thus simultaneously removed. The chief characteristics of Oliver's early years were an uncommon share of beauty, a sweetness and gentleness of disposition which corroborated the expression of his countenance, and a perfect disregard of danger, amounting to apparent unconsciousness. An anecdote illustrative of this peculiarity is still preserved in the family. When little more than two years old, Oliver had strayed into the road in company with an older child, and seated himself in the middle of it, when a horseman being discovered approaching, his companion jumped up and removed out of the way, calling to Oliver to do the same. He, however, sat still until the horseman approached, and drew up immediately over him, when, looking up calmly into his face, he lisped to him, "Man! you will not ride over me, will you?" The horseman, happening to be a friend of the family, dismounted, and carried the boy into the house, where he related the story with great interest, and much the same pride as if it had been his own child. He thought Oliver's conduct gave token of a confiding as well as a thoroughly courageous disposition.

Another anecdote, indicative of the same courage and of generous sympathy, was frequently related by his mother. When about five years old, he was sitting studying his lesson in the same room in which his father was busy with some accounts and papers. His sister, who was two years younger than himself, was playing about the floor, and, having found a paper which had fallen, had torn it into pieces, and turned her attention, according to the custom of young ladies

of that age, to some new mischief. Presently the paper was missed, and the two children directed to search for it. Oliver soon found the fragments and handed them to his father; the delinquency of the little girl was manifest in her shamefaced air. The paper happened to be of importance, and the father, in the irritation of the moment, lifted his hand to inflict some trifling punishment, when Oliver placed himself between, and, passing one arm round his little sister, raised the other to intercept the blow, saying, at the same time, in a firm, yet deprecating and respectful tone, "Oh, papa! don't strike her!" His mother often spoke of his manner of performing this little act as indescribable; at the same time so protecting and kind towards his sister, and so firm, so earnest, yet so respectful towards his father. Captain Perry was completely disarmed of his resentment, and overcome by the words and manner of the child; for he was a man of susceptible and generous feelings. The little mischief-maker was received into favour; her affectionate confidence in her brother was not diminished by his conduct on this occasion; and his parents ever after freely intrusted her, as well as their other children, to his guidance and protection. The anecdote is interesting, as showing that his character in boyhood and maturer years was consistent with itself, and the qualities of courage and generosity were as fully displayed within the narrow circle of his secluded home as when under the broad gaze of an admiring world.

Soon after this incident, Oliver, having already learned to read under the tuition of his mother, was removed to a school established by one of the neighbours for the benefit of the rising generation. The

increasing family and growing cares of Mrs. Perry rendered this relief desirable. The school was a sort of voluntary association, established without fee or gratuity by a benevolent bachelor of the neighbourhood, of considerable acquirements, though more noted for his goodness of heart and childlike simplicity. This old gentleman was as indolent as he was kind-hearted. He had often been importuned to open a school for the education of the children of the neighbourhood, and at length consented to do so on condition that he should be allowed to have his bed in the schoolroom. This being granted, the old gentleman reclined in state among his pupils, being assisted in his instructions, and in such little offices of flagellation as were indispensable, by his nephew, the present Judge William Peckham, of South Kingston, by whom the anecdote is related. Young Peckham's delegated dignity, however, was attended with this disadvantage, that, being nearest his uncle's bed, whenever the old gentleman felt an impulse to inflict punishment himself, his nephew, being nearest, usually had the benefit of it. As the school was at some distance, Oliver, with several female cousins of his own name, who lived on the adjoining farm, made their daily pilgrimage together. His little cousins had no brother, and were therefore glad to accept the protection of Oliver, who, though less in years than themselves, so threw himself between them and danger in all adventures on the road as to inspire a confidence in his manliness which was always justified. He seems, indeed, from his earliest youth, to have exercised an influence over those who approached him; this fact is attested by all the surviving companions of his youth. While his

extraordinary beauty attracted attention to his person, it was soon converted into affectionate regard and respect by the graceful amenity of his manners, by a modesty which had in it nothing of shamefaced awkwardness, and by a display of quiet firmness and calm self-composure. The distinction which he subsequently acquired, while it gratified many of the friends of his youth even to tears, excited no astonishment; it seemed but the realization of those just hopes which his youth had inspired.

At Tower Hill, distant four miles from Judge Perry's farm, there was an excellent school, kept by a venerable Scotchman of the name of Kelly; "old Master Kelly," as he might well be called, as he had already taught three generations of that vicinage, and was now busy in dinnin the same instruction into the fourth. Thither Oliver was despatched so soon as his age qualified him for the walk, and his female cousins became again the companions of his daily journeys, and subject to his protection. It is recorded of this worthy and time-honoured pedagogue, that, during the whole of his long servitude at Tower Hill, he had never once been known to lose his temper, but ever preserved a blessed equanimity, to be envied by all of his arduous and important calling. During Oliver's continuance at the school, old Master Kelly was obliged to retire from sheer superannuation, and was succeeded by a Mr. Southworth, from Connecticut. This gentleman is represented to have been also an excellent teacher, and to have possessed a happy faculty of attaching his scholars. Both Oliver and his cousins were accustomed afterward to speak of the time they were under his tuition as the happiest of

their school-days, and to recount with lively pleasure the recollections of their wayside adventures in their daily rambles. To this early association with his female cousins he was doubtless indebted for his peculiar gentleness of manners, and to a preference of female society to that of his own sex, which characterized him through life.

At the end of a year or two Mr. Southworth removed from the neighbourhood, and Doctor Perry fortunately procured the services of a Scotch gentleman of education and talents, who had recently been in the family of the governor, residing with him as tutor to his children. Oliver also had the benefit of his instructions, and became a temporary inmate of his uncle's family. Mr. Bryer proved not only an admirable instructor to the children, but an agreeable and entertaining companion. Unfortunately, at the end of a few months, he gave evidence of a failing which had caused the loss of a considerable fortune and his ruin in his own country, namely, an excessive fondness for the bottle. To be sure, he had the grace to absent himself from home during his periodical fits of intemperance; but, as the education of the children was thus interrupted, and as he was not rendered more clear-headed or more agreeable on his return, it became necessary to relinquish his services.

Meantime, Oliver's father had long since resumed the prosecution of his profession, and made many voyages, as commander and supercargo of merchant-ships, to Europe, South America, and the East Indies. By these he became in possession of a handsome income. Desiring to secure for his children, amounting now to four, a better education than South Kingston af-

forded, and to promote his professional convenience, he established his family in Newport, about the time that the private school at Doctor Perry's was broken up by the misadventures of Mr. Bryer. Here Oliver was placed at the school of Mr. Frazer, under whose skilful and judicious tuition he made rapid proficiency in all his studies. The relaxed discipline of the country schools, where, the numbers being small, everything was conducted somewhat upon the principle of brotherly love, furnished but an imperfect preparation for the sterner rule which the Highland gentleman found it necessary to exercise among his more numerous and heterogeneous disciples at Newport. The early days of Oliver's admission into Mr. Frazer's school were signalized by a very untoward occurrence; no less a one than his receiving a broken head one day for some trifling and perhaps unconscious misdemeanor, from a heavy ferule hurled by Mr. Frazer in an ungovernable fit of passion, such as he was often subject to. Seizing his hat, without leave asked or granted, Oliver went immediately home, and told his mother he could never enter that school again.

Mrs. Perry was a woman of strong feelings, eminently courageous temperament, and commanding character. She was necessarily indignant at the treatment of her child; but she was not much edified by Oliver's determinations as to what he would or would not do, nor disposed to yield to them. She did not reply to his decision not to return to Mr. Frazer's school, but quietly bound up his wounded head, and soothed him with expressions of maternal solicitude. Had she consulted only her resentment, it would have led her, at every hazard, to withdraw her child from

the authority of one who had abused it. She wisely reflected, however, that Oliver, being an unusually high-spirited boy, and his father generally absent, as he happened to be at that time, if she yielded to his wishes in this instance, he might expect the same indulgence whenever he felt discontented with a school from motives less well-founded. This would not only be a disadvantage to him with regard to his studies, but might tend to weaken her own control over him. She therefore wrote a note to Mr. Frazer, stating, in subdued terms, her indignant feelings at the outrage upon her child, coupled with the motives which restrained her from withdrawing him from the school, and concluding by the expression of a hope that she should not have cause to regret the mark of renewed confidence which she thus gave to Mr. Frazer, by again intrusting her son to him. On the following morning, as the usual hour came round, she called to Oliver, as if she had heard nothing of his declaration of the previous day, and told him it was school-time. At the same time, she placed the note for Mr. Frazer into his hand, and told him that she did not think he would receive similar treatment again. The proud boy's lip quivered, and a tear stood in his eye; but the thought of disobeying his mother had never entered his head, nor did it probably ever do so until the day of his death. She lived to rear five sons, all of whom entered the naval service of their country, and whom she fitted to command others by teaching them thus early to obey.

Mr. Frazer was conscious of his own culpable violence, and alive to the good sense and magnanimity of Mrs. Perry's conduct. He devoted himself unre-

mittingly to Oliver's improvement, became warmly attached to him, and won his attachment in return; for Oliver, though high-tempered, was a stranger to vindictiveness and cherished resentment. Newport was then an eminently commercial port. As many of the young men were intended for the sea, Mr. Frazer had an evening class for the purpose of teaching mathematics, and their application to navigation and nautical astronomy. He took a peculiar pleasure in initiating Oliver into these sciences; and in the intervals between school-hours, and on holydays, would frequently walk to the beach with him, where a horizon could be obtained to take astronomic observations, and otherwise render his lessons more practical. Before Oliver left Mr. Frazer's school, the latter was wont to boast that he was the best navigator in Rhode Island.

In Newport Oliver attracted to himself no less attention and good-will than among the partial friends of his childhood in South Kingston. His personal beauty, his modesty, and the mature and gentle gracefulness of his manners, won for him many friends. Among the number was Count Rochambeau, son of the distinguished general of that name, who commanded the French auxiliary army during our revolutionary war. This nobleman, being driven from his country by the terrors of the Revolution, had established himself at Newport, where his father's previous residence prepared for him many friends. Newport offered, moreover, many attractions to a person of refinement. Many of the inhabitants were wealthy and highly educated, and the tone of society was elegant and intellectual. Oliver's pleasing manners

attracted the attention of the count, and his amiability and worth soon converted the feeling of partiality into a sincere friendship. Notwithstanding the boy's youth, he frequently invited him to dine in company with older friends, and, when he left Newport, presented him with a beautiful little watch as a token of his regard.

When Oliver was but eleven years old, Bishop Seabury came to Newport, in the course of an episcopal visitation of the Eastern states, for the purpose of ordaining clergymen and confirming the young. Oliver's parents scarcely considered him old enough to receive and appreciate that solemn rite; but the bishop, having been greatly pleased by his appearance and manners, and by the maturity and seriousness which his conversation indicated, requested that he might come forward for confirmation. Afterward, when the bishop came to take leave of Oliver's parents, he laid his hands upon the boy's head, and blessed him in a manner so solemn and emphatic as to make an indelible impression upon all who were present. His mother was greatly touched by the incident, and received the impression that the blessing had been heard and answered, and would follow him through life.

Towards the close of the year 1797, Captain Perry, having secured a small competency, retired from his profession, and settled in the village of Westerly, in a remote part of the state. Oliver was now entering his thirteenth year; his education was unusually advanced for his age, for he had been a diligent student at Mr. Frazer's during the last five years; and an unbounded fondness for books, kept up from the early

period when his mother had first taught him to read, had imparted to him an unusual share of general information. Fortunately for the youth of those times, novels were not so abundant nor so universally diffused as now, and the reading of Oliver was confined to Plutarch, Shakspeare, the Spectator, and works of a similar character, suited to instruct and furnish the mind, and give force to the character.

About this period, our relations with the French republic were beginning to assume a hostile character. That ambitious and unprincipled government having expected to receive active assistance from us in her war against England, under a false construction of the alliance entered into during our war of independence, was provoked by our cautious neutrality. Deluded by the friendship of an extravagant and intemperate faction in the United States, who justified all the horrors of the French Revolution, into the belief that the great body of the American people was in their favour, the French sought to involve us in the war as their allies, by infringing our neutrality and complicating our relations with England. Citizen Genet, the French representative in the United States, not only undertook to grant commissions and fit out privateers in the United States to cruise against British commerce, but actually succeeded in sending some vessels to sea in defiance of our government. These, moreover, captured British vessels on our own coasts, and even within our navigable waters. Not content with this measure of aggression, insult, and contumely, the French cruisers and privateers soon after began to capture our own merchant vessels.

Every attempt to obtain redress from the French

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government for these aggravated grievances having failed, Congress so far adopted the recommendation of the president for an enlarged plan of naval defense as to authorize him, in April, 1798, to purchase, hire, or build twelve ships, of not more than twenty guns each, to be added to the six frigates which then constituted our navy, and three of which only, namely, the United States, the Constitution, and Constellation, were already launched. At the same time, a separate department of the government was created, to superintend the affairs of the navy, which had hitherto been under the control of the war department; and Benjamin Stoddert was subsequently created the first secretary of the navy under the Federal Constitution. Soon after, the president was authorized to purchase twelve additional ships, of from eighteen to thirty-two guns, and to instruct the commanders of our ships of war to capture any French cruisers, whether men-of-war or privateers, that might be found upon our coasts, having committed, or being likely, as there might be reason to believe, to commit any depredations on our commerce; also, to recapture any American vessels that might have been already seized. Laws were subsequently passed for the capture of French cruisers wherever they might be found, and for the condemnation of the prizes that might thus be made. Such was the origin of the quasi war with France, more familiarly known as the French disturbances.

The prospect of a naval contest with a nation which had so insultingly trampled on our commercial rights, and the recollection of his youthful enterprises on the ocean in the revolutionary war, prompted Captain Perry to seek employment in the marine about

to be created. Strong applications in his behalf, from the most influential persons in Rhode Island, were forwarded to the president, and he was at once commissioned a post-captain in the navy. On the ninth day of June, 1798, two days after the date of the commission, instructions were transmitted by Oliver Wolcott, the secretary of the treasury, to Mr. George Champlin, of Newport, directing him to procure such a ship as Captain Perry should approve of. No suitable ship could be found, and the construction of one was immediately commenced at the town of Warren, near Bristol in Rhode Island, in which neighbourhood ship-timber abounded. Thither Captain Perry at once removed, to attend to the construction of the ship, which it had been determined to name after General Greene, the most distinguished of the sons of Rhode Island.

Meantime, Mrs. Perry having accompanied her husband to Warren, Oliver, then not quite thirteen years old, remained in complete charge of the family, making all the necessary purchases, attending that his sister and younger brothers went regularly to school, keeping his parents constantly advised by letter of all that was passing, and conducting the whole affairs of the family with prudence and regularity. The obedience which he received from his younger brothers and from all the household was unquestioning and unqualified. With all this early influence over others, Oliver was still, however, a boy, with all the tastes of one, except that he had little propensity to mischief. Among his favourite amusements of this period was sailing boats and planks in the Pawcatuck river, which made an elbow quite near the house. Mr.

T. S. Taylor, now of South Kingston, was his school-fellow and playmate in Westerly; and, in bearing recent testimony to the good temper and kind feelings which characterized Oliver, and rendered him a universal favourite, states, that the only occasion on which he ever saw him angry was in one of their sailing excursions in the shoal water of the Pawcatuck, when the boys were representing a sea engagement; and Oliver's raft happening to be run down by that of young Taylor, who was the opposing admiral, Oliver's rage became ungovernable, and he was for a moment anxious to resort to any means, however foreign to the prescribed warfare, to recover the lost advantage of the day. Among his habitual playmates were his next brother Raymond and his cousin, George Perry, who, being a resident of the family and part of his garrison, joined daily in a game of ball before the house, into the spirit of which Oliver entered with all his soul, and with conspicuous activity, to the delight of his sisters, by one of whom the anecdote is related, to show that he had the tastes of his age, and that the control which he so early exercised over others was not owing to any undue assumption of manhood, but to his calmness, gentleness, and habits of self-command.

Amid this blending of manly and boyish occupations, Oliver was meditating seriously the plan of his future life. He had early imbibed a desire for the military profession, from the conversation of his mother. The friends of this lady, though Protestants and of Scotch descent, had been involved in the Irish rebellion. She herself had felt a lively enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, and had listened, with deep in-

terest, to every account she had heard of battles and skirmishes in the neighbourhood. She took a pleasure in recounting to her son the achievements of her countrymen and always insisted that they were the bravest people in the world. These narratives had fired the mind of Oliver, and created a desire in him to pursue the profession of arms. He had been born almost on the shore of the Atlantic, and with water and ships perpetually in sight. His residence in Newport, too, and the occupations of his father, had brought him much in connexion with ships and seamen, and blended with his inclination for a military life a desire to make his home upon the sea. When, therefore, hostilities with France became inevitable, and his father received his commission as a post-captain in the navy, and was appointed to the General Greene, the means of gratifying his double tastes for war and for the sea were at once provided. He wrote to his father, asking his leave to enter the navy; and, being requested to state the motives which influenced him in his choice he did so in detail and at considerable length. Mr. Thomas Hazard, a relation of Captain Perry, who is still living, happened to be present at Warren when this letter was received. It was handed to him to read; and the good reasons that were given for the choice, and the mature, sensible, and manly terms in which they were expressed, made an impression which is not yet effaced from the mind of the old gentleman. It is much to be regretted, that in the various removals and vicissitudes of the family, this letter, with almost every other relating to the youth of Perry, has disappeared. It would be of no little interest to examine how far the motives with

which he entered upon his profession were borne out by the results, and to compare his hopes with their after fulfilment. We should no doubt find in the comparison a rare example of a cloud castle excelled by the splendour of the real structure, and youthful aspirations for glory outdone by the reality.



CHAPTER II.

Oliver enters as a Midshipman on board the General Greene.—Cruise to the West Indies.—Return to Newport.—Second Cruise to the West Indies.—Ship ordered to St. Domingo.—Co-operation with Toussaint.—Blockade and Capture of Jaquemel.—Cruise round the Island.—Part of Crew taken out by Commodore Talbot.—Ship ordered to the Mississippi.—Encounter with a British line-of-battle Ship.—Spirited conduct of Captain Perry.—Return to Newport.—Peace with France.—Reduction of the Navy.—Captain Perry left out.—Oliver retained.—Tripolitan War.—Early operations.—Oliver embarks in the Adams.—She sails for the Mediterranean.—Employed in Blockading.—Gives Convoy up the Mediterranean.—Visits Spain and Italy.—Arrives off Tripoli.—Boat Expedition.—Blockade.—Attempted Negotiation.—Squadron returns to Gibraltar.—Perry returns home.—His Occupations and Character.

CAPTAIN PERRY had commenced the building of the General Greene immediately after receiving his commission, but it was not until the spring of the following year that the ship was ready to proceed to sea. She was a small frigate, rated at twenty-eight, and mounting probably thirty-six guns. The officers were chiefly appointed from Rhode Island, and the selection of them was intrusted by the secretary of the navy to Captain Perry. When, therefore, he had received Oliver's letter, assigning reasons for his wish to enter the navy, and had determined, with the consent of Mrs. Perry, to accede to it, there was no farther difficulty to be encountered. Oliver's name was placed on the list of those recommended to fill the stations of midshipmen on board the General Greene, and in April, 1799, he received

his warrant and orders to report for duty. Bidding adieu to his home and the companions of his childhood, he embarked with his father, and soon after sailed for the island of Cuba. It was in the West India seas that the French cruisers most abounded, and that our commerce suffered most from their depredations. The ship was engaged for several weeks in giving convoy to our merchant vessels bound from Havana to the United States. The yellow fever having, however, broken out among her crew, compelled Captain Perry to abandon his station in order to check the progress of the disease. He proceeded, accordingly, to Newport, and arrived there towards the close of July.

On the departure of Captain Perry from home, he had removed his family from Westerly to Tower Hill, in order that Mrs. Perry might be within reach of the friendly offices of his relations. Thither Oliver accompanied his father, and he remained chiefly at home during the period employed in refitting the ship and restoring the health of her crew. He was, of course, a person of great consequence, on his return from foreign parts, in the eyes of his younger brothers and sisters. They used to go forth betimes in the morning to pick berries for his breakfast, before the dew had been drunk up by the early sun, and followed him in all his rambles with untiring affection, and with a certain respectful deference, which was perhaps now a little enhanced by their awe of his uniform. During his absence he had commenced learning to perform on the flute, an accomplishment in some degree or other universal among midshipmen, but which he afterward carried to very great perfection. His child-

ish companions were, however, anything but fastidious critics; and, in their sylvan rambles, the simple melodies which he drew forth appeared to them altogether charming.

The health of the crew of the General Greene having been completely restored, she resumed her station off Havana early in the autumn, and continued to give convoy to our vessels bound through the Bahama Channel or into the Gulf of Mexico. The disturbed condition of St. Domingo, and the piracies committed on our commerce by the followers of Rigaud, a mulatto chieftain who aimed at establishing a rival power independent of Toussaint, occasioned the General Greene to be soon after ordered to that island. She was placed under the orders of Commodore Talbot, who was about to be despatched there in the Constitution, and who directed Captain Perry to proceed at once to the station and circumnavigate the island, with a view to the more extensive protection of our commerce.

The General Greene arrived at Cape Francois early in October, when Captain Perry received a communication from Mr. Edward Stevens, at that time our consul-general in St. Domingo, informing him of the state of affairs in the island, and pointing out the line of conduct necessary for the protection of our commerce. In the prosecution of the civil war then raging in the island, between General Toussaint L'Ouverture, who commanded the armies operating under the name of the French Republic, but in reality controlled only by himself, and General Rigaud, the former had signalized himself by a friendly course towards neutral powers, and a studious regard to the laws of hospitality

with respect to the merchant vessels visiting the ports within his control. Rigaud, on the contrary, carried on, through his armed barges, a predatory warfare, not merely on the vessels of the island belonging to the ports under the jurisdiction of Toussaint, but also on all neutral vessels approaching the coast. On this account, it became the policy of neutrals to protect and encourage General Toussaint, whose upright and honourable character inspired unbounded confidence, and oppose Rigaud. With this view the American and English consuls joined in granting passports to the cruisers fitted out by Toussaint, which, though wearing the French flag and owning the French allegiance, were exempted from capture, to which other French vessels were subject. The government of the United States had approved of the course adopted by their consul, and Captain Perry was ordered not to capture or molest any of the vessels fitted out by Toussaint for the purpose of defending his coasts against the barges of Rigaud, so long as they should continue to respect the commerce of the United States, but to render what aid he was able in putting down Rigaud.

While cruising in the neighbourhood of Cape Tiburon, on the ninth of February, 1800, Captain Perry discovered a number of Rigaud's cruisers anchored under protection of three forts on the coast. He immediately stood in and anchored under the forts, which, in less than thirty minutes, were silenced, with the loss of a number killed on the part of the enemy; the General Greene having only received a few shots in her hull, and some trifling injury in her rigging. The boats of the General Greene were speedily got out, in readiness to take possession of the vessels at

anchor, when, a large ship being seen in the offing which had the appearance of a French frigate, it became necessary to get the ship under way, in order to avoid being placed between two fires. Chase was given to the strange sail, which proved to be a captured French vessel in the service of England.

Soon after this occurrence, Captain Perry received an urgent request from General Toussaint that he would proceed with the General Greene off the port of Jaquemel, which he was then besieging. As this was the stronghold of Rigaud, from which he despatched his cruisers and into which they brought their prizes, Captain Perry readily complied with the request. He proceeded off the port, and not only so strictly blockaded it as to intercept the entry of supplies and produce a great scarcity, but took part in the active operations of the siege. The fire of the General Greene compelled the enemy at length to evacuate their strongest position, and led to the surrender of the garrison, consisting of five thousand men. The reduction of this place, from which the commerce of the United States had been seriously annoyed, and which was considered at home of great importance, was attributed by General Toussaint entirely to Captain Perry's co-operation. He returned him sincere and repeated thanks for his assistance, assured him of the lively gratitude he should ever feel to him and his country, and of his firm determination to extend his friendship and protection, on all occasions, to the citizens of the United States; a determination which he ever most faithfully observed.

After the fall of Jaquemel, Captain Perry prosecuted the cruise which he had been ordered to make

round the island of St. Domingo, which terminated early in April at Cape Francois, the port from which he had set out. Here he fell in with Commodore Talbot in the Constitution frigate, and was much annoyed by the commodore's taking from him twenty-four of his best men, and sending seventeen invalids to supply their places. Captain Perry made the conduct of the commodore the subject of complaint in his report to the secretary of the navy. He argued forcibly against the unfairness of ridding one ship of disease at the expense of another; and expressed the belief, that the removal of so many of his crew from the ship for which they had entered would have an injurious effect on the recruiting service in Rhode Island. He stated that many of his crew had families, or were the sons of substantial farmers, whose connexions looked to him for their safe return, and that, should any accident happen to them from their being turned over to another ship, or discharged at a distance from their homes, it would not only give ground of complaint against the commander, but excite clamour and prejudice against the navy. The fact is interesting, as showing, at this early period in the existence of our navy, the want of a higher grade of officers to command in chief, with a fairness which can never be expected from one who is at the same time captain of a particular ship, and also as giving an insight into the composition of our crews.

An order had been received from the secretary of the navy for the General Greene to proceed off the mouth of the Mississippi, in order to receive on board General Wilkinson and family, and transport them to a northern port of the United States. By direction

of Commodore Talbot, the General Greene now sailed on this service, and arrived off the Balize, about the twentieth of April. After a delay of several weeks, she sailed for Newport on the tenth of May, giving convoy by the way to an American brig bound to Havana. When off that port she fell in with a British line-of-battle ship, which, when near, fired a shot at the merchant brig to bring her to. The brig, in obedience to the orders of Captain Perry, paid no regard to the signal from the British ship, but continued her course. As the wind was light, the British captain despatched a boat to board the brig; but, as the boat approached, Captain Perry fired a shot ahead of her. This brought the boat alongside of the General Greene, and the line-of-battle ship at the same time bore down, and, when within hail her captain demanded why his boat had been fired on. Captain Perry replied, that it was to prevent her from boarding the American brig, which was under his convoy and protection. The British captain rejoined that it was very strange that one of his majesty's seventy-four gun ships could not board an American merchant brig. Captain Perry replied, "If she were a first-rate ship, she should not do so to the dishonour of my flag!" This memorable answer embraces the whole principle and profession of naval honour. It was worthy of Captain Perry, of his country, and of the future reputation of his son.

The foregoing incident would show that the school was a good one in which young Perry received his first lessons of naval honour. He made rapid progress in the attainment of professional knowledge, improved himself by diligent reading, and, as opportunity

occurred, by intercourse with society; and, while preserving a dignity of deportment beyond his years, by his gentleness and amiability won the affectionate attachment of all around him. His earliest letter which has been preserved, and the only one of this period extant, is now before the writer. It is brief, sententious, and well expressed; exhibits a strong attachment to his brothers and sisters, a respectful affection to his mother, to whom it is addressed, and a lively solicitude for her welfare.

On the arrival of the General Greene at Newport, towards the close of May, orders were received from the secretary of the navy to pay off the whole of her crew, except such a small number as might be necessary to take care of the ship while she was undergoing repairs. She was ordered to be prepared for sea with all possible despatch; and Captain Perry was directed to advise the secretary when the ship should be ready to receive her crew, that the necessary orders might be given for recruiting it. The secretary urged Captain Perry to hasten his preparations by the complimentary assurance that the services of the General Greene had been too important to be dispensed with a moment longer than might be necessary to re-equip her for sea.

Soon after, the negotiations for the settlement of our difficulties with France, which had been for some time going on at Paris, assumed an appearance of pacific termination. No farther measures were therefore taken to increase our naval force abroad, and the sailing of the General Greene was delayed, with that of other ships about to put to sea. Early in the following year, the treaty which had been agreed

upon in Paris was ratified by the Senate of the United States; and, very soon after, a change of administration having occurred, which brought Mr. Jefferson into office, on principles opposed to the navy, and to expenditures for almost every liberal object connected with the permanent welfare of the country, it was determined to reduce the navy nearly to the condition in which our difficulties with France had found it. The cruisers of all rates were reduced in number, by selling the excess, from forty-two to thirteen, and the officers were discharged from the service in even greater proportions. Of forty-two post-captains who had abandoned their pursuits, and many of them sacrificed their fortune, to come forward in defense of their country's rights, only nine were retained in the navy. The masters' commandant were dismissed in mass.

Captain Perry was among the large majority excluded from the service; and the circumstance was not a little painful to him, though announced by the secretary of the navy in the following terms, as well suited as any other to sooth the annoyance inseparable from such a notification: "The act providing for the peace establishment of the navy of the United States has imposed on the president a painful duty. It directs him to select nine gentlemen from among the captains of the navy of the United States, and to permit the remaining commanders to retire from public service with the advance of four months' extra pay. I have deemed it a duty, therefore, as early as possible to inform you, that you will be among those whose services, however reluctantly, will be dispensed with. Permit me to assure you that the president has a

just sense of the services rendered by you to your country, and that I am, with sentiments of respect, your most obedient servant."

Chance, which presided more at this reduction than judgment or discretion, so willed it that the reduction was much less thorough among the inferior classes of officers, and out of nearly three hundred and fifty midshipmen, upward of one hundred and fifty were retained to perform duty under the nine remaining captains. Fortunately for the honour of the country and the future reputation of its flag, the name of Oliver Perry figured among those of the midshipmen thus retained in the service.

Our difficulties with France were scarcely at an end, and our naval establishment reduced, before the unprotected state of our commerce created for us new enemies. In order to procure a suspension of the depredations on our commerce heretofore committed by the Barbary corsairs, our government had been guilty of the weakness of bribing the various regencies by an annual present of arms and other goods, and in some cases of money. On recent occasion, the Dey, of Algiers had carried his insolence so far as to compel the commander of the American ship of war which had brought out the tribute to proceed to Constantinople with a present which he, in turn, was desirous of making to the sultan. Having thus consented to pay tribute to Algiers, and tamely suffered one of our national vessels to be impressed into the service of a barbarian chief, to be employed in the degrading task of carrying tribute to a third power—having also paid tribute to the Bey of Tunis, the Bashaw of Tripoli reasonably enough came to the conclusion that he

was entitled to be treated with equal consideration, and determined, at any rate, to resort to similar means of extorting what he conceived to be his due. The custom of making presents and paying tribute had long been acquiesced in by the weak powers of the opposite continent, whose unprotected commerce covered the Mediterranean. The bashaw, after setting forth the various grievances that he had suffered from the United States, and especially the superior value of the presents which had been made to Algiers and Tunis, at length, towards the close of 1800, formally announced to the American consul, that if he did not receive a present in money from the United States within six months, he would commence hostilities against our commerce.

Our recent naval successes in the struggle against France had prepared the country to resist this insolent demand, and arrangements were forthwith commenced for refitting and recommissioning our dismantled ships. In the summer of 1801, Commodore Dale was despatched to the Mediterranean with the President, Philadelphia, and Essex frigates, and schooner Enterprise. Commodore Dale found that the bashaw, in fulfilment of his threat, had, at the expiration of the six months, caused the flagstaff of our consulate to be cut down, the symbol among those piratical regencies of a declaration of war. As Commodore Dale's orders restricted him to a defensive course, he confined his operations to blockading the Tripolitan cruisers in their own port, and in neutral ports where they happened to find them; thus the Tripolitan admiral having been found by the squadron with a ship and a brig in the Bay of Gibraltar, they were there

blockaded by a part of the squadron. Only one encounter took place at sea during the cruise of this squadron, and this was most glorious for our arms. It was between the Enterprise, of twelve guns, commanded by Lieutenant Sterret, and the Tripoli, a ship of fourteen guns. The action continued for three hours, at the end of which time fifty of the corsair's crew were either killed or wounded out of eighty which composed her complement. The president being under the impression that the Constitution did not authorize him, in the prosecution of this defensive warfare, to make captures, had ordered that no vessels should be taken from the enemy, and the Tripoli was accordingly disarmed and set at liberty.

Early in 1803 laws were passed by Congress empowering the executive to make use of every means of reducing Tripoli to peace. The term of enlistment for seamen was judiciously extended from one to two years, and a more numerous squadron of ships was fitted out, to take the place of the one of which the term of service had now expired. This squadron consisted of the Chesapeake, Constellation, New-York, Adams, and John Adams frigates, and schooner Enterprise. It was commanded by Commodore Richard V. Morris. On board the Adams, commanded by Captain Hugh G. Campbell, Oliver Perry again embarked as midshipman, after a little more than a year that he had remained detached from active service. The Adams was lying in Newport, which circumstance probably fixed Oliver's destination to that particular ship, and laid the foundation of a sincere and lively friendship towards him on the part of Commodore Campbell, which ended only with the life of that

valuable officer, whose name continues in the service to be the object of veneration.

The Adams sailed from Newport in June, and arrived at Gibraltar towards the middle of July. Here she fell in with the commodore, who had his flag on board the Chesapeake. The Adams, after having made a short cruise to Malaga with convoy, was left at Gibraltar to watch the two Tripolitan vessels in that harbour, and the commodore proceeded up the Mediterranean with the Chesapeake, New-York, John Adams, and Enterprise, having a number of merchant vessels under convoy, intending, after seeing them into the ports to which they were bound, to appear off Tripoli and commence his offensive operations. By the time, however, that he had reached Malta, the provisions of his squadron were getting short; and, on sailing for Tripoli, having encountered an adverse gale of many days' duration, he bore up, and, running down for Tunis, touched there and at Algiers, and subsequently reached Gibraltar again towards the close of March. At Gibraltar the commodore shifted his flag from the Chesapeake to the New-York, and the Chesapeake returned to the United States.

After so long and wearisome a detention at Gibraltar in blockading the Tripolitan cruiser—relieved, however, for Oliver by one redeeming circumstance, his promotion to an acting lieutenancy on his birthday, at the early age of seventeen—the Adams was now, to the great satisfaction of all on board of her, ordered to proceed up the Mediterranean with a convoy of ten sail, and subsequently to meet the commodore at Malta, from which place the whole squadron was to go to Tripoli, and active operations against

the enemy were forthwith to commence. The ship touched at Malaga, Alicant, and Barcelona in Spain, and, after remaining a few days at the latter place, proceeded onward with the residue of her convoy to Leghorn and Naples. Young Perry seized with avidity the opportunity thus afforded him of seeing something of the cities which the Adams visited; and the indulgence of his captain, to whose partiality he had owed the pleasing circumstance of so agreeable a present on his last birthday, enabled him to make excursions to various interesting points in the neighbourhood of the ports at which they stopped, from which he derived both pleasure and advantage.

During the month of May, the squadron, consisting of the New-York, John Adams, Adams, and Enterprise, joined company at the rendezvous at Malta, and soon after sailed for Tripoli. In approaching that city, a number of merchant vessels were discovered making for the port, protected by a flotilla of gunboats. The squadron at once gave chase, and succeeded in cutting the vessels off from the port, but not in hindering them from getting into another small harbour adjoining to the city. The vessels, being small, were soon unladen and hauled up on the beach, and breastworks were at once thrown up to defend them, the wheat which composed their cargo being used for the purpose. A large stone building adjacent to the bank was hastily fortified and filled with soldiery. The gunboats, by the aid of their sweeps, had been able to escape along shore, and get within the mole under cover of the batteries. Lieutenant David Porter, then first lieutenant of the New-York, volunteered to go in with the boats of the squadron during the night and destroy

the vessels on the beach. The commodore, while declining to accept his services for the night, as the darkness would prevent the co-operation of the ships, determined to attempt the enterprise on the following morning.

Accordingly, the boats were despatched with a strong force from all the ships. They pulled gallantly in under a heavy fire of musketry from the Moors and Arabs stationed behind the breastworks, and imperfectly sustained by the fire of the ships, on account of their distance from the shore. In defiance of the sharp fire of the enemy, our gallant seamen landed under their very breastworks, which were so near that the unarmed rabble collected behind the combatants assailed our men with stones, and succeeded in firing the vessels on the beach. They then returned to their boats, and pulled out through the midst of the enemy's fire to their ships. Although the vessels were in flames before our men left them, the Tripolitans succeeded in preserving most of them by great exertions. Twelve of our men were either killed or wounded, and the loss of the enemy was supposed to have been more considerable. Lieutenant Porter, who so gallantly led the enterprise, was among the wounded. It is not known that young Perry certainly took part in this daring exploit; but his rank as a young lieutenant on board one of the ships in the squadron, and the heroic spirit which ever characterized him, render it very unlikely that he should have been absent from this scene of danger and of glory.

Soon after, an effort was made to destroy the fleet of gunboats which were anchored at the entrance of the harbour, between the mole and a reef of rocks

which formed the western side of the channel. On the morning fixed for the attack, a very light breeze prevailed, and only the John Adams, commanded by Captain J. Rodgers, was able to reach her station and engage the enemy. The gunboats retired from the fire of the John Adams behind the mole, and towards nightfall the ship withdrew into the offing. On the following day the commodore made an effort to arrange our difficulties by means of negotiations; but, as there had been nothing in the manner in which the war had hitherto been carried on to give these barbarians a very formidable idea of our naval power, the attempted negotiation was attended with no pacific result. Soon after the commodore sailed for Malta, leaving Captain Rodgers in the John Adams to prosecute the blockade, with the aid of Captain Campbell in the Adams, and Lieutenant Isaac Hull in the schooner Enterprise. Towards the close of June the John Adams had an engagement with an enemy's ship of twenty-two guns, which had left Tripoli in the night and attempted to escape the blockade; being discovered by the Enterprise, she was pursued into shoal water by the Enterprise and John Adams, and compelled to anchor near the shore, where parties of cavalry collected for her defense, and the fleet of gunboats also hastened from Tripoli to her assistance. After a spirited action, the battery of the corsair was silenced, and her crew jumped overboard and swam ashore. Preparations were making to get the boats out and take possession of the prize, when she blew up.

Shortly after this occurrence, the commodore, having received information of hostile operations against

our commerce on the part of the Algerines and Tunisians, recalled all the ships from Tripoli and raised the blockade. He collected his squadron in Malta, from whence he made a visit to the Italian coast. After visiting Sicily, Naples, and several of the neighbouring ports, the John Adams was despatched with a convoy of American vessels down the Mediterranean, while the Adams cruised down on the Barbary side, touching at the various ports. On the reunion of the squadron again at Gibraltar, Commodore Morris found letters recalling him from his command, which temporarily devolved on Captain Rodgers, who hoisted his flag on board the New-York, in expectation of the speedy arrival of Commodore Edward Preble, who had been appointed to prosecute the war, and was daily looked for in the Constitution. Captain Campbell replaced Captain Rodgers on board the John Adams, while Commodore Morris proceeded in the Adams to the United States, where he arrived towards the close of November, 1803.

After an absence of a year and a half, young Perry returned again to his family, which he found established in Newport. He now devoted himself earnestly to the study of mathematics and astronomy, and the general improvement of his mind. His leisure hours were passed in the society of the intelligent and refined. Those who remember him at this period represent him as quick and excitable in his temper, but not disposed to unreasonable anger, nor implacable in his resentments. He was a faithful and generous friend, and ready to go any length to serve those to whom he was attached. He appeared exceedingly well in conversation, and the value of his judicious

and well-timed remarks was enhanced by the modesty and absence of all pretension with which they were expressed. He was fond of the society of ladies, and his good looks and unusually graceful demeanor fitted him to appear most advantageously in it. To these social qualifications were added a fine taste for music, and an uncommonly skilful performance on the flute. It is remarked of him that few young men had so nice a sense of honour with regard to female character. He frowned indignantly on any who trifled with the affections of a lady, and his own deportment towards the sex was courteous, circumspect, and deferential.

These elegant tastes naturally involved an aversion to dissipation generally. The only extravagance in which he indulged was occasioned by his fondness for horses, in one of the finest of which that he could meet with when on shore he usually invested his surplus pay. He had, indeed, been accustomed to horses from his childhood, and was a fearless and elegant rider. To this accomplishment he added, in our country, the more questionable one of playing an admirable game of billiards; but, as he never had any *tasté* for gambling, his visits to the billiard-room were attended with no bad results. He is said to have fenced dexterously, and been generally skilful in the use of arms. Such was the character, tastes, and occupations of young Perry as he was verging from youth towards the season of manhood.

CHAPTER III.

Prosecution of Tripolitan War under Preble.—Perry's anxiety to take part in it.—Equipment of four Frigates.—Perry ordered to the Constellation.—Joins her at Washington.—Mingles in Society.—Sails for the Mediterranean.—Preble superseded.—The War loses its chivalrous Character.—Expedition of General Eaton.—Its partial Success.—Perry transferred to the Nautilus.—Commodore Rodgers succeeds to the Command.—Concludes Peace.—Visits Tunis.—Confirms the friendship of that Power.—The Nautilus visits Algiers.—A change of Administration in that Regency.—Visit to Gibraltar.—Perry removed to the Constitution.—His Character as an Officer.—Returns home in the Essex.—Description of him by a Shipmate.

PERRY was not destined to a long enjoyment of the tranquil occupations of his residence in Newport. The command of Commodore Preble in the Mediterranean had been distinguished by a more vigorous system of operations than that of any of his predecessors. The whole period of his presence before Tripoli had been signalized by a series of bombardments and boat-attacks, conceived in the highest spirit of naval enterprise, and executed with a brilliant daring which has never been surpassed. The boat-attacks, planned and executed under the eye of Preble, and supported by the guns of the Constitution and the small vessels composing the little squadron, partook, indeed, of a character of heroism which call to mind the ancient struggles of Christians and Saracens in those same waters. The hand-to-hand struggling, the hair-breadth escapes, the brilliant self-devotion to succour or to save, all invest this short period of

Preble's command with a chivalrous and heroic interest of the highest stamp.

It was the fortune of Perry to have been attached to the Mediterranean station both immediately before and immediately after the command of Commodore Preble. Had he been with him throughout the brilliant period of his service, he would have associated his name earlier than he eventually did with the glory of a Preble, a Decatur, and a Somers; he would either have covered himself with equal renown, or found, like some of the heroes of that war, an early grave.

Intelligence of the earliest achievements of Commodore Preble's command had led young Perry to weary of his present professional inactivity, though in itself not destitute for him of pleasure and improvement. He desired to be again in the Mediterranean; and the loss of the Philadelphia, which left the Constitution the only heavy ship before Tripoli, determined the government, which was more than ever resolved to prosecute this war to a successful issue, to fit out four additional frigates. The President, Congress, Constellation, and Essex were the ships selected, and, as there were only three captains in the service junior to Commodore Preble, it was most unwisely determined to supersede him in the command. The government might have escaped from the dilemma by making a single additional captain, or it might have deducted one ship from the number of its re-enforcement, so as to have left Preble in the command. It could not discover that the magic was in the individual. The predecessors of Preble had all the advantages that could be derived from the array of superior numbers. Preble had the true desire of glory; the power of adapting

his means to the end; the cool, unbiased judgment, which could weigh the difficulties which presented themselves in his path, and justly estimate the chances of success.

The Constellation, one of the ships of the new squadron, was to be commanded by Captain H. G. Campbell. The partiality of Perry's old commander and friend readily induced him to procure Perry to be ordered to his ship as one of his lieutenants. The ship was fitted out at Washington. This was young Perry's first visit to that part of the country. In the intervals during which his professional duties permitted him to be absent from the ship, he visited, by invitation, several families of distinction in the neighbourhood, into which he was received with kindness and hospitality.

The intelligence, urbanity, frankness, and unaffected good-nature which he everywhere met with, impressed him most favourably towards the inhabitants, and from the earnestness with which his society was sought, the favourable impression was evidently mutual. His youth and uncommon share of good looks, enhanced by his intelligence and modesty, were qualities that would have made him circulate anywhere, and it is not to be wondered at that the handsome young officer was no less a favourite with the young ladies of the neighbourhood than with their discerning sires. His confidential letters of this period to his mother intimate the belief that, were he disposed to make his fortune by marriage, the chances for success would not be inconsiderable. His youth, however, he considered an objection to his taking upon himself so weighty an obligation.

Early in July the Constellation left Washington, and soon after proceeded to the Mediterranean. She arrived off Tripoli in September, in company with the President, bearing the broad pendant of Commodore S. Barron. As the Constellation remained on the station, Commodore Preble having returned home in the John Adams, which had arrived shortly before as a storeship, the force under the command of Commodore Barron, consisting of five frigates and five stout brigs, was the most formidable squadron which had ever been united under the command of an American officer. With a single frigate, and a few clumsy and ill-equipped gunboats, Commodore Preble had made repeated attacks on the forts, batteries, and flotilla. With the present force, the master-spirit of Preble, had it been intrusted with a prolonged command, would have quickly reduced Tripoli to ruins or unconditional submission. Nothing, however, beyond a blockade, which the former force could have equally well effected, was now achieved; and Perry and other young men, who had come to the Mediterranean with their imaginations fired by the brilliant heroism which had been so recently displayed in the arena which now lay before them, were condemned only to see near at hand the heroes that were left from so many chivalrous encounters decked with the honours that they had won for themselves, to look upon the scenes which they had illustrated and ennobled by their valour, and to admire deeds which they were not permitted to imitate.

Subsequently to the arrival of Commodore Barron, some operations against the power of the reigning Bashaw of Tripoli, exceedingly romantic in their char-

acter, took place on the land, with which the Constellation is believed to have co-operated. The reigning bashaw did not succeed regularly to the sovereignty, but by usurpation, after having deposed his elder brother. The deposed prince had the good fortune to escape with his life, and, after many wanderings, took refuge in Egypt among the Mamelukes, by whom he was hospitably received. Mr. Eaton, our consul for many years in Tunis, having formerly been an officer in the revolutionary army, conceived the project of making use of the deposed prince to create an insurrectionary army, which should co-operate with our squadron before Tripoli for the overthrow of the reigning bashaw. The government adopted his plan on his arriving in the United States to unfold it, and he was sent out with Commodore Barron, with orders for the latter to aid him in his enterprise. Mr. Eaton was accordingly despatched to Alexandria, accompanied by a lieutenant of marines and two midshipmen, who volunteered to take part in this wild expedition.

Mr. Eaton lost no time in placing himself in communication with the deposed bashaw. A numerous party of adherents of the dethroned prince, refugees from Tripoli, and adventurers of all nations, amounting to about five hundred men, was speedily assembled, and Mr. Eaton assumed the command with the title of general. Traversing the desert, their baggage being carried by camels, this singular assemblage arrived, towards the close of April, before Dearne, a seaport town within the pachalic of Tripoli. Here the general fell in with the American brig Argus, and the schooners Nautilus and Hornet; and, having received

supplies of arms and ammunition, and the vessels having taken their stations so as to aid in battering the town, the forces of General Eaton marched to the assault, and, though resisted from behind the walls first, and subsequently from house to house, by more than threefold numbers, they gallantly made good their way into town. An army from Tripoli not long after appeared before the walls, and made several desperate attacks in the hope of recovering the stronghold. They were, however, gallantly repulsed by General Eaton; and the Constellation having opportunely appeared in the harbour at the close of the last attack, the enemy was thrown into consternation, broke up the siege, and abandoned their camp, with the greater portion of their heavy baggage.

About this time, the schooner Nautilus being in want of an officer, young Perry was ordered to her by Captain Campbell as first lieutenant, until the pleasure of the commodore should be known as to the appointment.

Flushed with his successes at Dearne, and having established the lawful pacha in possession of the second province of the pachalic, General Eaton now urged Commodore Barron to furnish him with such supplies and assistance from the squadron as he thought would enable him to show himself before the walls of Tripoli with every prospect of a speedy termination of the war. The commodore, however, declined lending any more extensive aid than he had hitherto afforded, on the ground that, if the ex-pacha possessed the influence in the regency to which he laid claim, he was already in a situation to recover his authority. Soon after, Commodore Barron retired, on account of his low

state of health, from the command of the squadron, which devolved again on Commodore J. Rodgers; and, not long after, a treaty of peace was concluded, in which the claim for tribute was abandoned by Tripoli, and ransom paid for the American prisoners remaining in possession of the regency after the exchange had been made for the Tripolitans taken by us during the war. This negotiation brought General Eaton's romantic expedition to a close, finding him still at Dearne, where, though he had advanced no farther, he had been able to maintain himself against every effort made to dislodge him.

On the conclusion of peace with Tripoli, the squadron proceeded to Tunis, the government of which had made some warlike demonstrations; in consequence of our vessels off Tripoli having captured a Tunisian cruiser, which, with two prizes in company, had been detected in an attempt to break the blockade. The bey had threatened our consul with war unless the vessels were instantly restored, and had furthermore declared that the arrival of our squadron in his waters would be looked upon by him as a commencement of hostilities. This threat did not prevent Commodore Rodgers from appearing off Tunis, where his spirited conduct, and the formidable armament, consisting in all of thirteen vessels, gunboats included, by which it was enforced, soon brought the bashaw into a more pacific mood. He readily consented to continue at peace on the terms of friendship heretofore existing between the two powers, and so far moderated his demand for the immediate restoration of the prizes as to express a wish to send a minister to Washington, to address his requests directly to the president. In

this wish he was indulged, and his minister soon after embarked for the United States in the frigate Congress, commanded by Decatur.

At this conjuncture, the Constellation, in which young Perry had come out, returned to the United States. Being desirous of seeing more active service, and to obtain farther practice in schooner-sailing, he remained on board the Nautilus. This vessel was now despatched to Algiers, where she arrived at the moment of one of those frequent insurrections by which the form of government was wont to be summarily changed in that regency. The dey had rendered himself obnoxious both to the people and the soldiery by his extortion and cruelty. These broke out in revolt, and, headed by a captain of one of the cruisers, presented themselves at the castle, announced to the dey his deposition, and told him to fly immediately to a mosque if he would save his life. The dey went forth for the purpose, attended by his vizier, and both were cut to pieces as they cleared the outer gate of the castle. The heads of his adherents, and those who had grown rich under his favour, fell profusely on every side; and, at the end of an hour, a new dey was installed, salutes were fired, and all was once more as noiseless and tranquil as despotism could desire.

From Algiers the Nautilus proceeded to Gibraltar, to meet the commodore's despatches and procure supplies. In a letter to his mother from this place, dated in September, 1805, young Perry gives the particulars of his recent visit to Algiers. He also mentions that an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards were encamped before the Rock of Gibraltar. They were speedily to be re-enforced by an equal number of French, when

they were to make an attack on the fortress which Napoleon was so anxious to possess. Perry mentions that the officers of the garrison were very confident in their ability to resist the assailants, and gave it as his opinion that their confidence was well founded. He mentions that he had been very kindly noticed by the commodore on the occasion of his last visit to the flag-ship, and had been offered orders, on the return of the *Nautilus* to the rendezvous at Syracuse, either to the eighteen-gun brig *Siren* as first lieutenant, or to the commodore's own ship, the *Constitution*. His letters manifest, as in his younger days, the most affectionate interest in his parents and brothers and sisters. His expressions of endearment are more than usually tender, and his eagerness to obtain information as to the welfare of those whom he loved extreme. They manifest, moreover, a tender solicitude, not unsuited to his age, for the welfare of fair friends, concerning whom his mother had failed to give him information.

When the *Nautilus* again fell in with the flag-ship, Perry was ordered by the commodore to the *Constitution*. The commodore had been attracted by his appearance, manners, and conversation; and in desiring to have him transferred to his own ship, had felt some anxiety lest the tall boy—for in age and appearance he was little more—should fail to come up to that high standard of seamanship and officer-like bearing which the commodore ever exhibited in himself and required in his officers. His misgivings in this respect were, however, soon set at rest; and he found that young Perry had so well employed his six years of almost uninterrupted service, that he was an ex-

cellent seaman, while his manner as an officer was in all respects admirable, calm, gentlemanly, dignified, and self-possessed. He was at this time, as ever after, rigorous in the observance of that etiquette which is one of the most useful barriers against irregularity and insubordination.

One of the earliest occasions of his attracting the attention of the commodore was on his making a complaint of a want of observance on board the flag-ship of the customary mode of receiving officers of his grade. This occurred while he was first lieutenant of the *Nautilus*. It had been the subject of remark, that the lieutenants of the other vessels were not always received with the usual honours, the boatswain's mates piping the side, the side-boys laying over to hold out the man-ropes, and the lieutenant of the watch at the gangway to receive his equal in grade. The lieutenants of the small vessels, whose sense of their dignity is usually in the inverse ratio of the size of their vessel, were not a little shocked at the omission. Young Perry said that the neglect ought to be remedied; and, accordingly, on the first occasion of his going on board the flag-ship, finding that the omission took place in his case, and that the complaint was true, stated the circumstance immediately to the commodore, who caused the proper honours to be thereafter studiously observed.

Perry's manner as an officer, and mode of carrying on duty at this early period, has obtained the highest eulogium that it could receive from one at that time his junior, the late Captain John Orde Creighton, himself so distinguished for his elegant manner of working ship. He was accustomed to speak of the effect

produced upon him when he first heard young Perry manœuvring the Constitution as officer of the deck; the admirable skill which he displayed being enhanced by the ease, grace, and dignity of his manner, and the matchless clearness and melody of his voice. The intonations of young Perry remained long after upon his ear, and his whole manner and deportment became the object of his emulation.

In the course of the cruise in the Constitution, Perry so effectually secured the approbation and kind feelings of Commodore Rodgers, that when, after the satisfactory settlement of our various difficulties with the Barbary powers, that officer prepared, towards the close of the summer of 1806, to return home, and shifted his flag for that purpose to the Essex, he took his young friend with him to that ship, in which he returned to the United States, where he arrived in October. On board the Essex Perry found in Mr. Daniel Murray a brother officer of congenial spirit, with whom he formed a warm and lasting friendship. From this gentleman we are able to obtain the following slight reminiscence of the homeward voyage of the Essex, and of the character and manners of Perry at this period: "My intercourse with him previously had been slight and casual; although on the same station, we had rarely been thrown together. On examining the dates of our commissions, I found that he ranked me, and he came home second lieutenant of the Essex. During our passage home, which was a very long one, within a few days of two months, I had great pleasure in cultivating Perry's acquaintance. His fine temper, gentle manners, and manly bearing, soon attracted and attached me to him

strongly, and I believe our regard to each other was as sincere as it was lasting, having been uninterrupted to his death. I regret that I can lend but little assistance towards a minute narration of the incidents of the first few years of his service. There can be no doubt that they were well, and, I should think, unusually well employed; for his age when in the Essex could not have been much more than twenty-one, and he was then an excellent seaman, an accomplished officer, and a well-bred gentleman. His subsequent glorious career was just what I had anticipated."



CHAPTER IV.

Perry resumes his Studies at Newport.—Falls in Love.—Is employed in building Gunboats.—Is engaged to be Married.—Sails for New-York with Flotilla.—Employed in Protection of the Harbour.—Attack of the Leopard on the Chesapeake.—Perry's Feelings on the occasion.—British Spoliations on our Commerce.—Our inability to protect it.—Perry ordered to build more Gunboats.—Appointed to command the Revenge.—Attached to Commodore Rodgers's Squadron.—Ordered to Washington to re-fit.—Sails for Charleston.—Cruises on Southern Coast.—Encounter with a British Sloop.—Expects an Engagement.—Prepares to board.—Pacific Termination.—Returns to Charleston.—Proceeds to New-York.—Receives Instructions from Commodore Rodgers.—Is ordered to Newport.—Engaged in a Survey of the Sound.—Ship-wreck of the Revenge.—Ineffectual efforts to save her.—Crew saved.—Court of Inquiry.—Perry honourably acquitted.—Furloughed.—Married.

ON the return of young Perry to Newport in the autumn of 1806, he resumed with diligence his mathematical and miscellaneous studies. Having, however, revived his intimacies of former years, he was soon drawn into the gayeties of the place, and thus led to make an acquaintance which, for a season, effectually put to flight his mathematical reveries. In January, 1807, at an assembly, he first met the lady who subsequently became his wife—Miss Elizabeth Champlin Mason. She had not yet completed her sixteenth year; was just entering life in the first bloom of loveliness, sparkling with feeling, intelligence, and talent, and gifted with a thousand rare qualities of truth, simplicity, fortitude, and warm-hearted affection, which have steadfastly attended her through many a scene of joy and one of sorrow.

The professional employment of young Perry at Newport favoured their frequent meeting, and the acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into love. It was the season of the gunboat and embargo policy, that wretched system of supplying protection to our commerce from foreign spoliation, by annihilating it; of blockading our own harbours, and defending their egress against our own merchant vessels by means of gunboats, suited only to invite the aggression of belligerents at home by so futile a preparation to resist it, instead of accompanying our commerce, wherever it had a right to go, by formidable squadrons for its protection.

Perry having been appointed to superintend the construction of seventeen gunboats at Newport, was employed for several months in the neighbourhood where he was most desirous of remaining. Associated with him in this duty was his intimate friend and late shipmate in the Constellation, Lieutenant Samuel G. Blodgett, with whom, in what concerned his obligations as an officer and the dearest feelings of his heart, he could freely sympathize. It is creditable to young Perry, and shows the confidence of the Navy Department, based upon the favourable report of his various commanders, that he should have been chosen at so early an age to build, equip, and command this large detachment of gunboats; and the circumstance of his being ready in June to proceed with his force to New-York, shows that, with every private motive to delay, he must have used great energy and despatch in the execution of the service intrusted to him. Before his departure for New-York he became the pledged and accepted lover of Miss Mason.

The detachment of gunboats under the command of Lieutenant Perry was employed, with the rest of the flotilla stationed at New-York, in endeavours to protect the harbour and adjacent waters from the encroachments of the English and French belligerants, especially the former. It was while he was employed in this service that the British filled up the measure of insult and sanguinary outrage of our flag, by the attack of the Chesapeake frigate by the double-decked ship Leopard, which lay at anchor within our own waters in Lynnhaven Bay, waiting for the sailing of the Chesapeake, in order to take from her certain alleged deserters. While the humane feelings of the country were wounded by the causeless slaughter of a number of Americans, the national sense of honour was stung into keen resentment by the mortifying reflection that no effort had been made to maintain the glory of our flag ere it was lowered in dishonour. The feeling with which Perry received the intelligence of this cold-blooded attack is expressed in a letter written soon after to his father, who was at that time abroad. It is interesting, as showing the feeling with which he entered the struggle with England which soon after ensued; and his warning for her to "beware!" has since proved to be prophetic. "You must, ere this, have heard of the outrage committed by the British on our national honour, and feel with us all the indignation that so barbarous and cowardly an act must naturally inspire. Thank God! all parties are now united in the determination to resent so flagrant an insult. There is but one sentiment pervading the bosom of every American from North to South. The British may laugh, but let them beware! for never has

the public indignation been so completely aroused since the glorious revolution that made us a nation of freemen. The utmost spirit prevails throughout the United States in preparing for an event which is thought inevitable, and our officers wait with impatience for the signal to be given to wipe away the stain which the misconduct of one has cast on our flag."

The elder Perry could fully sympathize with this indignation of his son. He had returned to the merchant service, in which he had been for some years employed, either as a master or supercargo. On a recent voyage in command of an Indiaman, he had been detained by a British cruiser at the Cape of Good Hope under some one of the vexatious orders in council. A daily visit to the ship of the commanding officer, to plead for the release of his property from unjust detention, called forth almost daily some new indignity, until, outraged on one occasion beyond endurance by some taunt to his country, he knocked down the officer of the deck from whom he had received the insult. From the unpleasant consequences in which this affair involved him, he was released by the interference of an officer of rank, whom, when a soldier of the Kingston Reds, he had assisted in taking prisoner, and whom he had carried behind him on horseback to his father's house, where the prisoner had been hospitably entertained. More recently, Captain Perry had been detained, with other American shipmasters, in Lisbon, where a fresh insult against his country had involved him in a duel with a British officer, in which his antagonist had been wounded. He could therefore fully sympathize in the indignation expressed by his son, and only regret that his separation from

the naval service of his country should prevent him from taking part in the struggle which had now become inevitable.

The war, which at that time was almost universal among the other maritime nations of the world, had thrown nearly all the carrying trade into the hands of our merchant ships. This exemption from the evils of war, and the immense profit we were deriving from our pacific and neutral position, excited much jealousy on the part of England and France, the two principal belligerants. Impelled by this jealousy, and by the predatory spirit which war invariably engenders; stimulated, moreover, by the desire of depriving each other of the advantages which they were mutually deriving from our trade, these nations took advantage of its unprotected state to pursue towards it a system of legalized spoliation. England had led the way with an order to her cruisers to capture all neutral merchant ships trading to the colonies of a belligerant at war with England, which belligerant did not permit such trade to her colonies during peace. This order was ostensibly intended to distress the French colonies in the West Indies and elsewhere; its immediate effects fell almost entirely on our commerce. Not long after, she declared the coasts of France, Holland, and Germany, from Brest to the Elbe, in a state of blockade; and, though such rigorous and effectivē blockade as is necessary to constitute a legal one was manifestly impossible over an extent of coast, including all its inflexions, of more than eight hundred miles, yet she so far enforced it as to make captures of such vessels as were accidentally detected in approaching these forbidden shores. The French emperor, though still less

able to blockade the whole British coast, followed the example of England, and proclaimed it in a state of blockade; his cruisers and privateers actually making captures of neutral vessels on a coast where they only appeared themselves as fugitives, and at the imminent peril of capture. Such a system of warfare, in violation of all the hitherto established rights of neutrals, had a ruinous effect upon our trade, and threatened it with absolute annihilation. The improvidence of the government, and the sordid policy which it had pursued towards the navy, left it without the means of convoying our ships with formidable squadrons, and causing our rights to be respected. Even at that late hour for preparation for maritime defense, such ships as we possessed might have been fitted out, and others built, and sent abroad for the protection of our commerce. It was more congenial to the narrow and timid policy of that day to recall our commerce from the ocean, than to follow and protect it there. It was in this spirit that the embargo was proclaimed towards the close of 1807, and evils not less ruinous than the spoliations of the belligerants inflicted by ourselves. Instead of sending forth line-of-battle ships and frigates to convoy our merchant ships, it became necessary to have fresh recourse to the panacea of gunboats, and one hundred and eighty-eight additional boats were ordered to be built, which carried the whole number of this class of vessels to two hundred and fifty-seven, whose means of annoyance were directed against our own vessels, to prevent them from departing, and to maintain an effective blockade of our own ports.

Lieutenant Perry had so satisfactorily acquitted himself of the duty of constructing and equipping the

seventeen gunboats, which he had carried to New-York and continued for a season to command there, that he was now ordered to commence the construction of an additional number, which were forthwith laid down at Westerly, on the Pawcatuck River, which forms the western boundary of Rhode Island, and at the adjacent village of Norwich, in Connecticut. In the construction of these boats he was employed from the beginning of February, 1808, until April, 1809, when, the vessels being completed, their farther equipment was suspended.

In the same month he was appointed to succeed Lieutenant Jacob Jones on board the schooner *Revenge*, of fourteen guns, then attached to the squadron under the command of Commodore Rodgers, who had his flag on board the *Constitution*. This squadron, consisting of four frigates, five sloops, and a number of smaller vessels, had been, as an after-thought to the gunboat system, wisely placed in commission, to assist in guarding our neutrality and protecting the sovereignty of our own coasts. The outrage on the *Chesapeake* had quickened the resentment, while it excited the watchfulness of our little navy. With the probability of a war with England mingled the reflection that we should have to contend with a formidable foe, to quicken the zeal of our officers in preparing for the struggle, and the chivalrous hope to wipe away the stain on the honor of the profession, which it had received in that ignominious encounter. The flower of our navy was rescued from the gunboat service and its inevitably deteriorating effects, the tendency of which was to destroy the discipline, moral character, and tone of the profession, and collected on

board of a few ships of force, under commanders who had been trained at Tripoli, the whole being under the orders of Commodore Rodgers. Under the watchful guidance of this skilful and intrepid seaman and exactly rigid officer, our navy was brought to a state of discipline, efficiency, and readiness for action which has never been surpassed. If accident subsequently prevented that consummate commander from encountering an enemy of equal force during the war, the victories that were won by his more fortunate pupils were not a little owing to the training, discipline, and readiness for service which he had so universally introduced.

After cruising during the summer and winter in company with the squadron, Perry was ordered, in April, 1810, to proceed with the *Revenge* to Washington, to undergo extensive repairs at the navy-yard of that place. It is recorded in the log-book of the *Revenge*, that, in passing Mount Vernon in ascending the Potomac, the schooner fired a salute in honour of its former possessor, whose remains still repose there. This has been an honourable custom of our national vessels in passing this consecrated spot ever since we have had a navy; and though, in the regulations with regard to salutes, no provision is made for one on such an occasion, it is to be hoped that it may never be omitted, and, in order to this object, that it may be legalized by an express regulation.

The *Revenge*, having been put in order for a cruise, sailed from Washington on the twentieth of May, bound to Charleston, in the neighbourhood of which place she was ordered to be employed. Having touched at Norfolk, she proceeded to sea, and arrived safely at her destination, after a boisterous passage,

without other accident or adventure of note recorded in the log-book than the falling overboard of a man, who, notwithstanding that it blew fresh and the schooner was going free under a press of sail, was recovered. The circumstance is thus sententiously recorded in the log-book: "At ten, thirty, Johnson Dickson, marine, fell overboard. Rounded to, out boat, brought him safe on board." We shall see in the sequel, and it is at once an evidence of Perry's humane feelings acting to excite and quicken him, and of his skilful seamanship, that he was unusually successful in his efforts to rescue shipwrecked and drowning men.

On the twenty-second of June, the Revenge again put to sea from Charleston, for the purpose of cruising on the neighbouring coast and protecting our waters against the encroachments of the British cruisers that were hovering about the coast, and of the French, should any be encountered. The orders under which he acted were to protect our merchantmen, and those of all other nations within our waters, extending to the distance of a marine league from the coast, from capture or molestation. Any foreign cruiser or privateer attempting to molest such merchant vessels was to be captured and sent in for adjudication. Any private armed vessel found hovering within our waters as thus described, with a view of making captures, was to be ordered off, and force used to compel her departure. If such vessel had increased her armament in the United States, she was to be sent in for adjudication. Any citizens of the United States found affording aid as pilots, or by furnishing supplies to such vessels hovering on the coast, were to

be reported to the nearest United States attorney for prosecution.

In the middle of July, while in the neighbourhood of Cumberland Island on the coast of Georgia, the deputy United States marshal arrived on board the Revenge with a warrant from the United States district judge for the seizure of a ship then lying in Spanish waters, off Amelia Island, under English colours, and bearing the fictitious name of Angel, though known to be the ship Diana, of Wiscasset. It seems that the master of this vessel, by name James Tibbetts and by birth an Englishman, had fraudulently retained possession of the ship during several years, refusing to return with her to the United States, as the owners had urgently and repeatedly ordered him to do. Permission had been obtained from the Spanish governor of Amelia Island for the American authorities to take possession of the Diana, he being convinced that she was really an American vessel, belonging to the individuals in whose behalf she was claimed. The ship was, however, lying under the battery of the British gunbrig Plumper and schooner Jupiter, and, as she wore English colours, it was presumed that Tibbetts had procured from the English commander a promise of assistance; a presumption rendered reasonable enough by the frequent outrages of every sort committed by British cruisers on our commerce.

Lieutenant Perry immediately yielded to the request of the marshal that he would take possession of the Diana, and, having called to his assistance three gunboats stationed in the river St. Mary's so as to reduce the disparity of his force with the English

force with which he was likely to have to contend, he proceeded to Amelia Island and took possession of the Diana, carrying her from under the guns of the English cruisers, and anchoring her off Cumberland Island. At the request of the agent, he now placed the sailing-master of the Revenge on board of the Diana as master, to prosecute her voyage to Europe, and in a few days stood to sea in company with her, to convoy her off the coast. Before clearing the land, a large sail was discovered bearing down upon them from the southward and eastward. This was soon ascertained to be a British sloop-of-war. The Revenge was cleared for action so soon as the stranger was made out to be a cruiser. The ship rounded to alongside of the Revenge, and sent an officer on board of her to state that the sloop was H. B. M. ship Goree, Captain Byng, and to request that the commander of the schooner would come on board and explain the character of his vessel. Lieutenant Perry returned a distinct refusal; and having no idea of being "Leopardized" without one blow for the honour of the flag if his reply should prove displeasing, and having little hope of resisting in a fair cannonade with a vessel of double his force, he took a favourable position for boarding at a moment's warning in case of a shot or any show of hostility from the Goree. He was prepared to lead his whole crew over the bulwarks, armed with cutlasses, pistols, and battleaxes, the instant the two vessels should be in contact, and the suddenness and audacity of the assault might well have rendered it successful. This is the opinion of the officer from whom the anecdote, which is confirmed by the log-book, was received, William Sinclair, Esq., now a

purser in the navy, and who served on board the Revenge as midshipman. He states, "Our crew consisted of about ninety good men; and, although the attempt to board might appear desperate, yet it was our belief at the time that, considering the Goree would not expect such an attempt, our gallant commander would have succeeded. His cool self-possession and admirable command of feature inspired every soul with enthusiastic confidence, and foreshadowed that gallant exploit on the lake which has rendered his name immortal."

Fortunately, the captain of the Goree was a reasonable man, and probably saw the impropriety of enforcing what he had asked for; he sent back his boat with a request that an officer might be sent from the Revenge to give the necessary information as to her character; and as this was merely doing what Captain Byng had already done, the request was readily granted, and a boat and officer in like manner sent from the Revenge to the Goree, to state the character of the Revenge and the name of her commander: a name which a very few years later would have been a familiar one.

The valuable services rendered by Lieutenant Perry in recovering the Diana called for the warmest thanks of those who were interested in her, and the circumstances attending it became known to the country in consequence of the publication by the secretary of the navy of the following letter, addressed by the agents of the ship to Lieutenant Perry, with a request that a copy of it might be forwarded to the secretary of the navy: "The Diana having arrived at Savannah in safety and sailed again upon her destined voy-

age, we avail ourselves of the opportunity to inform you thereof, and to tender to yourself and to the gentlemen of the squadron in the river St. Mary's under your command while there, in behalf of ourselves and the owners of the ship, our warmest thanks for the zeal and anxiety manifested by you for the honour and prosperity of the American flag. We cannot close this letter of thanks without expressing our admiration of the firmness and decision, properly tempered with moderation, evinced by you, when it seemed probable, from the reports in circulation, that a hostile course might have been adopted against the Diana, and of the complete state of preparation in which you constantly held yourself to repel any attack upon the sovereignty of the United States."

After cruising a short time on the coast of Georgia, the Revenge returned to Charleston. This was her place of rendezvous and of refit while on this station. Charleston was at that time a naval station, and the command vested for many years in Commodore Campbell, Perry's old captain during two cruises to the Mediterranean. The partiality which the old gentleman had always felt for his youthful officer, and which had showed itself in forwarding his promotion to a lieutenant at a very early age, continued still to follow him with acts of kindness. His leisure hours at Charleston, in the brief intervals of his cruises, were always pleasantly spent in the society of his old commander and of a numerous circle of friends, with whom his acquaintance dated from this period, and who watched his future career with no little interest.

On the 10th of August the Revenge left Charleston for New-York, where she was again attached to

the squadron under Commodore Rodgers, engaged in the protection of our coast from Cape Henry to the eastern limit of the United States. Here he received a circular from the commodore, enclosing another from the secretary of the navy, which he was ordered to communicate to his officers and crew. "You, like every other patriotic American," it stated, "have observed and deeply felt the injuries and insults heaped on our country by the two great belligerants of Europe; and you must also believe that from neither are we to expect liberality or justice, but, on the contrary, that no opportunity will be lost of adding to the outrages to which for years we have been subjected. Among these stands most conspicuous the inhuman and dastardly attack on our frigate Chesapeake; an outrage which prostrated the flag of our country, and has imposed on the American people cause of ceaseless mourning. That same spirit which originated and has refused atonement for this act of brutal injustice, exists still with Great Britain, and from France likewise we have no reason to expect any regard to our rights. What has been perpetrated may again be attempted. It is therefore our duty to be prepared and determined, at every hazard, to vindicate the injured honour of our navy, and revive the drooping spirit of the nation. Influenced by these considerations, it is expected that, while you conduct the force under your command consistently with the principle of a strict and upright neutrality, you are to maintain at every cost the dignity of our flag; and that, offering yourself no unjust aggression, you are to submit to none, not even a menace, from a force not materially your superior." As a commentary upon this letter,

Commodore Rodgers added the following: "Circumstanced as we are with the two great belligerants of Europe, and particularly England, I should consider the firing of a shot by a vessel of war of either nation at one of our public vessels, while the colours of her nation are flying on board of her, as a menace of the grossest order, and, in amount, an insult which it would be disgraceful not to resent, by the firing of two shot at least; and that, under similar circumstances, should a shot be fired at one of our vessels, and strike any part of her, it ought to be considered an act of hostility, meriting chastisement to the utmost extent of all your force." The foregoing is chiefly interesting now by showing us the anxious preparation with which we went into the war with England, and by reminding us, in the contrast with our present position, of all that we have gained from it.

Kindly entering into Perry's strong desire to be employed in the neighbourhood of Newport, the commodore now assigned him to the extent of coast between Montauk Point and the south shoal of Nantucket as his cruising ground, with Newport for a rendezvous; and ordered him to proceed immediately to that place. He lost no time in obeying the order, and remained during the autumn in and about the harbour, occasionally making a cruise along the coast. The log-book bears evidence of a lively attention to whatever could render the vessel efficient and formidable. The training of the crew of the *Revenge* was not merely confined to the customary exercises of the great guns and small arms, but frequently, when under way, targets were thrown overboard, at which the crew were exercised in firing, exposed to the same

swell of the ocean, the influence of which they would probably feel in a real encounter.

In the month of December Perry joined the commodore at New-London, and soon after received a communication from him, stating that, as the ports of New-London and Newport, together with Gardiner's Bay, possessed great advantages, from the circumstance that, at any season of the year, and with the wind from any quarter of the compass, the dullest sailing vessel could gain at least one of the three, and thus obtain a convenient and safe anchorage, he considered it a matter of much importance that a correct survey of the whole should be made, including the intermediate navigation, with the bearing of the various headlands, so as to form a single sheet chart of the whole on a large scale, and therefore instructed Perry forthwith to commence the necessary surveys for the completion of so desirable a work.

The selection of Perry for this purpose was due to his high standing as a seaman and an officer, and his superior scientific attainments. Pleased with the duty, and flattered by its being assigned to him, as is apparent from his reply to the order of the commodore, he set about the execution of it without loss of time, and repaired at once to Newport, with the survey of which he had been directed to commence his operations. Though the object of the commodore was enlightened and laudable, the season of the year which had been selected for this survey was certainly very unsuitable. Perry set about it, however, with a good will, and with a perfect indifference to the exposure so far as he was himself concerned. The commodore had ordered him to complete the survey of Newport,

and return to New-London within a week. But the weather was very severe, and the boats were unavoidably occupied in communicating with the shore, and bringing off water and provisions. At the end of the week, little had been done towards the survey; but Perry determined, in compliance with his orders, to return to New-London, and obtain from the commodore an extended term to complete the service.

A contrary wind, attended by a thick fog, prevented him for several days from sailing. At length, on the eighth of January, 1811, the weather cleared off, and he sailed with a light northeast wind from Newport at midnight, in order to have daylight to pass through the Race, as the dangerous strait between Fisher's Island and Watch Hill is called. Mr. Peter Daggett, a well-known coasting and Sound pilot, was on board the *Revenge* in the character of acting sailing-master and pilot. After the schooner had been under way about an hour, it became once more foggy. Perry asked Daggett if he could take the schooner to New-London in such weather. He replied, without hesitation, that he could. Perry ordered an anchor to be kept ready for letting go, and told the pilot if he had any doubt, to come to anchor at once. At six in the morning the *Revenge* passed Point Judith in fourteen fathoms. The distance from thence to Watch Hill, the next headland, was estimated by pilots and laid down on the chart as thirty miles on a nearly west course. As the vessel was only going three knots, and the ordinary strength of the flood-tide, which was then setting, was estimated at two knots, it was computed that at least six hours' of such sailing would be necessary to bring the schooner up with Watch Hill Reef,

which makes out from the headland of that name. She was, however, on account of the fog, steered a point off shore, or to the south of the usual course. At nine o'clock, Perry being below, heard the leadsmen, there being one in each chains, give ten fathoms as the cast, the previous casts having been from eleven to fourteen fathoms. He immediately went on deck and ordered the helm to starboard; he found that it was already to starboard, having been put so by order of the pilot. The schooner came rapidly round until she headed south by west; but, as she still shoaled her water to five, three, and at last to two and a half fathoms, which showed that she was embayed by the reef, Perry ordered the anchor to be let go. It was instantly let go, and, at the same moment, her stern struck. The anchor checked her bows round so as to enable her to head out clear of the reef, the signal spindle on which was now visible, and a light breeze springing up at the same moment, Perry ordered the sails to be trimmed, and, as the schooner shot ahead, gave the order to cut the cable. She ranged a short distance ahead, when the wind failing, and the swell and flood-tide coming in strong at the same moment, canted her round bows on to the reef.

As it was the top of high water, the chances of saving the vessel were very slender. Nevertheless, the boats were hoisted out and sent to sound, and a kedge and hawser carried out in the direction of the deepest water. The hawser being hove well taught, eight of the guns were thrown overboard, and whatever heavy articles could be got at. The water was started, the pumps working incessantly, and hands employed at the same time in baling with buckets, for

she had begun to leak badly. Minute guns were fired as signals of distress to bring off assistance; and, as the schooner laboured and thumped heavily, Perry ordered the mainmast to be cut away, and soon after the foremast also. In twenty minutes after the schooner struck, she bilged in two places.

No hope now remaining of saving the vessel, Perry gave his whole thoughts to the business of saving the crew intrusted to his care. The signal guns had brought several boats from the shore, but the swell rendered it difficult and dangerous to approach the wreck. Nevertheless, the sick were lowered into the boats by carefully watching the swell, and after them the marines and boys, and sent on shore. During the rest of the day, the boats from the shore, with those of the schooner, were busily employed in removing whatever was of most value. By sunset nearly everything movable, including the sails, rigging, and small arms, was removed. The wind had now come on to blow violently on the reef, and the surf nearly broke over the vessel, which was fast going to pieces; the cold, moreover, was intense. Under these circumstances, the duty which Perry owed to the officers and men who had remained toiling with him on the wreck throughout the day, rendered it incumbent on him to remove them to a place of safety. They were with difficulty enabled to reach the boats by lowering themselves from ropes over the stern, and Perry was himself the last to leave the wreck. On reaching the shore, the crew were mustered and distributed to the various houses for the night.

On the following morning, a portion of the wreck, consisting of the deck and bulwarks, was discovered

to have floated off the reef. The launches of the President and Constitution frigates had arrived from New-London during the night, under charge of Lieutenants Ludlow and Morris, to render assistance. By the aid of these, Perry went off to the wreck and took it in tow, in order to beach it on Fisher's Island. While engaged in this effort, it came on to blow heavily from the northeast, attended with sleet and excessive cold. A smack hired by the commodore had arrived, and assisted in towing the wreck. The remainder of the schooner's armament, consisting of six light carronades, was now taken into the launches. When nearly up with the island, the hawser attached to the wreck parted, and the violence of the sea breaking over the vessel prevented any attempt to approach her to make fast again. The wreck was therefore abandoned, and the smack, with the launches in tow, ran into New-London to take refuge from the storm.

As is usual in such cases, a court of inquiry was ordered to take into consideration the circumstances attending the loss of the Revenge, and to make a minute report of all the facts, upon which the secretary of the navy could find a judgment as to the necessity of farther proceedings. This court, which consisted of Captain Hull, and Lieutenants Ludlow and Morris, decided that the fault of getting the vessel on shore rested with the pilot alone; that every possible exertion had been made by Lieutenant Perry, first to get his vessel afloat, and then to watch over the preservation and welfare of the sick and helpless portion of his crew, and lastly to preserve whatever was most valuable of the vessel's furniture. It was proved that his manner had been unchanged by the peril and anxiety of

his situation; that his orders had been given in his calm and ordinary tone, and executed with the same cheerfulness and order as on common occasions, and that the most perfect discipline and subordination had been preserved throughout the whole trying scene. It was only from the evidence of others that the fact was elicited that he had been himself the last to leave the vessel.

In reviewing these circumstances, we will find that Perry exhibited in this moment of disaster not a few of the qualities which were afterward displayed on a more brilliant as well as more fortunate field of adventure; the same calmness, the same self-composure, the same indomitable unwillingness to yield to the pressure of overpowering circumstances, the same humane sympathy with the suffering; storms, cold, which so often benumb the stoutest heart, the perils of rocks and waves, had no power to unman him or bend him from his duty; and we find him, on the morning after the disaster, returning to the wreck, and clinging to the few remaining planks of the vessel which had been intrusted to him with unyielding tenacity. The impression made upon the secretary of the navy by the evidence adduced before the court of inquiry may be gathered from the following letter, addressed by him to Commodore Rodgers:

"Having attentively examined the proceedings of the court, I derive much satisfaction from perceiving that it is unnecessary to institute any farther proceedings in the case. With respect to Lieutenant Perry, I can only say, that my confidence in him has not been in any degree diminished by his conduct on the occasion. The loss of the *Revenge* appears to be justly

chargeable to the pilot. This accident will no doubt present to Lieutenant Perry considerations that may be useful to him in future command. An officer, just to himself and to his country, will not be depressed by defeat or misfortune, but will be stimulated by either cause to greater exertions. If there should be any situation in the squadron to which you can appoint Lieutenant Perry that may be consistent with his just pretensions, and not interfere with the rights of others, you will appoint him to it; if not, he is to be furloughed, waiting the orders of this department."

After returning to Newport, Perry made a visit to Washington. He was kindly received by Mr. Paul Hamilton, then secretary of the navy, who had conceived a favourable opinion of him from the circumstances attending his late southern cruise in the *Revenge*, from his conduct during the disaster which had deprived him of his command, and the approving testimony of his various commanders. The chief object of his visit was to ascertain whether he could remain undisturbed for a year by any call of duty which would withdraw him from Newport. Having been reassured on this subject, by receiving a leave of absence for that term, he returned with a light heart to Newport, and on the fifth of the following May he was married to Miss Mason, after an engagement of four years. An attachment tested by so long a probation, and strengthened by every fresh observation of each other's qualities of character and of heart, promised as fair a share of wedded happiness as ever falls to the lot of mortals. Until death interposed to separate the devoted pair, this promise was most amply redeemed.

The wedding tour of the young couple consisted

in a journey of some length, over various parts of New-England, with which both of them were desirous of becoming better acquainted. In the course of the tour they passed a day at Plymouth, in which place Perry took a particular interest, from its having been the residence, for a time, of the first of his ancestors who had emigrated to America.



CHAPTER V.

State of our relations with Belligerants.—Napoleon repeals his predatory Decrees.—Continued Hostility of England.—War against our Commerce.—Impressionment of our Seamen.—War with England.—Perry applies for Sea-service.—Appointed to command Newport Flotilla.—Zeal with which he enters on the service.—His Discipline.—Style of Correspondence.—Exercise of his Flotilla.—Capture of the Guerriere.—Lieutenant Morris posted.—Dissatisfaction of the Service.—Perry approves of it.—His Conduct towards Mr. Morris.—Loss of Lieutenant Blodgett.—Renewed application for Sea-service.—Offers his Services to Commodore Chauncey for the Lakes.—Capture of the Macedonian.—Proposed Increase of the Navy.—Suggests the expediency of building a Frigate in Rhode Island.—Lieutenant Allen appointed to the Argus.—Perry remonstrates.—Claims the Command.—His Delicacy to Allen.—Perry designated to command on Lake Erie.

M EANTIME, no improvement had taken place in our relations with England. The embargo had been found so ruinous to our commerce, so difficult of enforcement, and so very unpopular, that it had been revoked after a duration of more than a year, and a state of non-intercourse with France and England substituted for it. France, having no commerce of her own, suffered greatly more than England from this suspension of trade. On this account, and not from any superior sense of justice, Napoleon was induced so far to relax his predatory spoliations on our commerce as to bring himself within a provision of the non-intercourse act, by which, in case of the repeal, on the part of either of the belligerants, of their offensive measures against our commerce, it was to be suspended. England, under the protection of her

numerous fleets, being in the full enjoyment of her customary trade, was less sensibly affected by a non-intercourse with us, though still, even at that time, for her an evil of no trifling magnitude. She continued to persevere in all her offensive measures towards us. Her orders in council were conceived not in justice or any recognized usage of nations, but simply in the interest of her commercial jealousy. She destroyed our commerce, not because it fostered the strength of her enemies and gave them ability to resist, but because it interfered with the employment of her own shipping, and the gains of an illicit traffic which she herself carried on with them. As was said, with no less truth than point, in the president's message in June of 1812, "She carries on a war against the lawful commerce of a friend, that she may the better carry on a commerce with an enemy; a commerce polluted by the forgeries and perjuries which are, for the most part the only passports by which it can succeed."

But the most exasperating of her attacks upon us was the perpetual violation of our flag by her cruisers, not only on the great highway of nations, but upon our own coasts and even within our own waters, for the purpose of impressing our native seamen under the plea of their being Englishmen, or the insulting pretext of their having been impressed before. In this way hundreds of Americans were annually torn from under the safeguard of our national banner, compelled to serve on board of British ships, to lose their lives in the cause of their oppressors, or be made instrumental in taking away the lives of those with whom their country owned no enmity. And this exasperating system was pursued in a manner the most

haughty and insulting. The British navy had been demoralized by the extensive system of plunder carried on under the orders in council, and a predatory and freebooting spirit had become a prevailing characteristic in it; while the absence of all opposition from the weak victims of its injustice had fostered an insolent and overbearing demeanor. The outrage of impressment from on board our merchant vessels, extreme in itself, was almost always accompanied by unmeasured insult.

It was a circumstance of this nature that brought the President frigate out, on the occasion when, while in search of the *Guerriere*, she fell in with the Little Belt in the night, and an accidental encounter took place, for which the contempt of the English and the well-grounded exasperation of the Americans mutually prepared them. British contempt had, however, the greatest share in bringing on the contest, as the Little Belt was the first to fire. She was also, as might have been expected from her vastly inferior force, the greatest sufferer, though beyond all proportion with her relative strength. This encounter added new intensity to the feeling of aversion existing between the two countries; and Great Britain showing no disposition to do us justice for her past aggressions against the honour of our flag and the sanctity of the persons of our citizens, or to discontinue them for the future, we were compelled at length to adopt the only honourable alternative that remained to us, that of declaring war. This alternative, from which an earlier display of spirit and development of our vast latent naval power would have saved us, was resorted to in June of 1812.

In expectation of this event, Perry had hastened

to Washington to endeavour to procure active employment at sea. He was promised the first vacancy suited to his rank that should occur, and, in the mean time, was ordered to take command of four gunboats then laid up at Newport, together with four others, the construction of which he had superintended at Norwich and Westerly in 1808 and 1809, immediately previous to his taking command of the *Revenge*. He had now been promoted to the rank of master commandant, and, was appointed to the chief command of the flotilla stationed at Newport for the defence of the harbour and adjacent waters. He forthwith opened rendezvous at Newport and at New-London for recruiting the petty officers and seamen. He was ordered by the secretary of the navy to designate suitable persons to command the gunboats, and accordingly selected various officers of the navy and experienced shipmasters, who, on his recommendation, were duly appointed, with the rank of acting sailing-master. His connexion with the officers and men of the Newport flotilla is chiefly interesting, as it was continued on a more important sphere of action. Among the persons employed in this service were midshipman Daniel Turner, acting masters W. V. Taylor and Stephen Champlin, and purser Samuel Hambleton—all names advantageously conspicuous in the battle of Lake Erie. Lieutenant S. G. Blodgett, the friend of his earlier professional years, was also associated with him in this command. Subsequently, four more gunboats from New-York were added to the Newport flotilla, making the whole force under his command twelve gunboats, manned by about two hundred officers and men. Two of them were stationed off Stonington, and

the remainder at and about Newport, to watch the cruisers of the enemy, and repel any marauding attack on the villages of the neighbouring coasts. These vessels were generally armed with a single long twenty-four pounder, and had a complement of thirty men, exclusive of the officers.

The service that could be rendered by such a force was slight, and its purely defensive character rendered it uncongenial to the temper and feelings of Perry. Nevertheless, he devoted himself to the duties of his station as commandant of the flotilla with earnest zeal, and his official correspondence of the time bears evidence of his anxious and untiring efforts for the defence of the coast intrusted to his vigilance, and for the annoyance of the enemy. The tone of his correspondence is respectful, modest, and decided. What he has to say is always expressed briefly and sententiously, and there is nowhere the slightest trace of that professional jealousy or pique which is apt to grow up between officers of the same or of different arms, stationed in the neighbourhood of each other. In the whole mass of his letters to his inferiors—and, as there were twelve vessels under his orders, most of them generally at a distance, they were sufficiently numerous—there is not a single harsh, dictatorial, or wounding expression; but one contains an approach towards reproof. It is expressed as follows: "I wrote you some days since to repair to this place, with the boats under your command, without loss of time, and am a little surprised to find that you have not yet arrived. Should this find you in New-London, you will sail immediately for this, if the weather will at all permit." This absence of reproof shows the absence

of necessity for it; a state of discipline that prevented offences rather than occupied itself with punishing them. It proves the extraordinary personal influence that Perry everywhere exerted from his earliest years; something which has been described by those who knew him intimately as winning affection while it repelled familiarity. It also gives evidence of that distinctive faculty of greatness, intuitive perception of character, and unerring judgment in the selection of agents to carry out his views. Perry did not make a single bad appointment. Each person who acted under him became his warm and devoted friend, and his friends proved all true men. To the various letters which he constantly received from the minor civil authorities on the extended line of coast under his protection, whose apprehensions rendered them importunate and unreasonable, and sometimes uncivil, he replied with uniform calmness, conciliation, and urbanity.

The following letter, much the longest to be found in his correspondence, furnishes a fair specimen of his style of professional communication. It was called forth by an order of the government, issued immediately after the gunboats were equipped and manned, and, as it appears from Captain Perry's letter, before the crews had worked out their advance, for the discharge of all but eight of the twenty-four men, exclusive of officers and petty officers, composing the crew of each boat. The motive of this reduction was economy, and it was proposed to trust to the chance of procuring volunteers to supply the place of the discharged seamen. Captain Perry's letter is cogent and to the point; it shows completely the fallacy of trusting to such a resource. It is dated at Newport on the

twenty-seventh of July, and is addressed to the secretary of the navy.

"Having received an order a few days since to discharge all the crews of the gunboats under my command, except eight men to each, I consider it a duty to inform you of the probable result of that order. From the peculiar situation of this town, a ship may, from the time she is discovered in the offing, be at anchor in this harbour in less than an hour and a half. The water up the bay is sufficient for vessels of the heaviest draught, and the towns of Providence, Bristol, Warren, Wickford, and Greenwich are without fortifications of any kind. There are very few seamen in this place at present, most of the ships belonging to it being absent. It will therefore be impossible to expect any assistance, or, if any, very trifling, on an emergency, from them. But, sir, if volunteers could be procured, the enemy would give us so little time for no doubt they would take a favourable wind to come in—that it would be impossible to beat up for them, get them on board, and station them before probably the occasion for their services would be entirely over. From the circumstance of the gunboats here being for the defence of so many valuable towns, totally defenceless in other respects, and from the singularly exposed situation of this town to the sudden invasion of an enemy, I hope, sir, an exception may be made in favour of the boats on this station, and that they may be permitted to retain their full complement of men. I forbear to say anything of the situation of an officer who commands a large nominal force, from whom much is expected, and by whom little can be performed."

The foregoing letter evinces a lively interest in the welfare of his native state, which fully justifies the affection with which its citizens cherish his memory. It betrays no desire or willingness to acquiesce in an arrangement which would have removed from him in a great measure the responsibility which he was under for the protection of the coasts intrusted to his defence. He wished to be armed at all points, and then held responsible for the result. The zeal with which Perry executed the duties of his command is the more commendable, on account of his extreme desire for active employment at sea, which had not only led him to make repeated applications to the navy department, but had induced him in June, just before his appointment to the command of the Newport flotilla, to make a journey to Washington, and exert all the influence he could bring forward to procure him the command of a sloop-of-war. His own earnest solicitation and that of his friends were, however, powerless to procure him his coveted opportunity for distinction. He returned to his uncongenial command, and devoted himself to it faithfully. In the training of his crew to the exercise of great guns and small arms, with the use of the cutlass and pike, he personally took unwearied pains, as well as in drilling them in the necessary manœuvres to enable them to act with effect on shore. Occasionally he assembled his gunboats together, and carried them through the various evolutions in the management of fleets, and, often dividing them into adverse squadrons, one under his own orders, the other under Lieutenant Blodgett's, would carry on a mimic engagement. This was not the kind of engagement for which he was at that time sighing.

but it was not, perhaps, a useless preparation for one; and it is not unlikely that he may thus have acquired a facility in manoeuvring a number of vessels, or formed some conception of advantages to be gained and critical moments to be seized on in the encounter of fleets that were afterward useful to him.

When, soon after the war began, the Constitution captured the Guerriere, after a short and brilliant action, and the country blazed with enthusiasm from one extremity to the other, Perry was more taken up with sharing this enthusiasm than overcome by chagrin at his own present exclusion from any chance of participating in the glory of the victors, and the acclamation with which they were everywhere received.

It will be remembered that Lieutenant Charles Morris was promoted after the action two grades for having well performed his subordinate duties of first lieutenant of the Constitution. It would have been a proper, suitable, and customary reward for his good conduct if he had been made a master commandant, to date from the day of the victory. But it was a manifest violation of propriety, and of all that was due to the rights and feelings of the whole grade of masters commandant, thus to promote over their heads a lieutenant who had done his duty faithfully in a purely subordinate character. The greatest injustice, however, which it involved was to the veteran commander of the Constitution, under whose orders the victory had been won; himself a practised seaman and thorough officer, and who has ever been eminently the captain of his own ship. There was no promotion for the chief in command, and the liberality of the country was not equal to creating a new grade in order to

promote him, when that new grade was otherwise necessary to the prosperity of the service. Instead of promoting him, the absence of promotion was made more sensible by raising his subordinate during the action two grades, and making him, by a single stroke of the pen, his equal.

Perry was one of the commanders over whose heads Lieutenant Morris was thus summarily promoted. He took a different view of this act from all others of his grade. The chivalrous magnanimity of his feelings on this occasion not only led him to acquiesce in Lieutenant Morris's promotion; but even to take a pointed means of showing it. Mr. Morris had reached Providence, where he was lying ill of a dangerous wound he had received during the action, when Perry first heard that he was to be promoted at once to a post-captaincy. He told his intimate friend, Mr. William S. Rogers, subsequently a purser in the navy, and from whom the anecdote is derived, that this contemplated promotion had occasioned much dissatisfaction among the commanders and lieutenants above Morris. This feeling Perry said he did not share, and proposed to make a visit to Providence in one of the gunboats under his command, in order to express to Morris his own views on the subject. Perry went accordingly, and Mr. Rogers accompanied him, and was present at the interview, which he represents as having been singularly interesting. After inquiring with much solicitude concerning Mr. Morris's health, he cordially congratulated him on the brilliant result of his cruise, and told him that his contemplated promotion to a post-captaincy met with his hearty approbation. He hoped that the same reward might attend any future

display of gallant conduct; a hope the more generous and disinterested, that his own more advanced rank would not allow him, in case of like good fortune, to be so largely benefited. The unassuming and modest deportment of Mr. Morris, who was sensibly struck with this generous effort to relieve him from the painful feelings which the opposition of those he was about to supersede had evidently occasioned him in his debilitated state of health, and the frank and chivalrous bearing of Perry, which had in it a consciousness that he too would one day deserve the gratitude of his country if the opportunity were but given to him, rendered the whole scene most striking and impressive. Nor did Perry's generous feelings towards Mr. Morris end here. When he was subsequently promoted to a captaincy and appointed to the Adams, a noble corvette with twenty-eight guns on one deck, thus rewarded for his past services and placed in a situation to win more glory, Perry, who was ineffectually seeking for the command of a sea-going vessel of half that force, instead of giving way to any envious or ill-natured feelings towards him, took pleasure in rendering him every facility in procuring a crew, allowed the best of his own men to volunteer for the Adams, in order to go where they could be more useful, sent Mr. Daniel Turner to Providence to recruit men for her, and subsequently parted with that favourite officer, in order that he might place himself in the path to distinction. Having induced Captain Morris to receive Mr. Turner on board his ship, he sent him off with a draught of efficient seamen, without waiting for the orders which Captain Morris had told him would be speedily forwarded. Every officer in the navy will appreciate

the generous self-denial of Perry's conduct; it is as rare in the service, and as difficult to imitate as it is every way worthy of admiration. The reader will not fail to contrast it, in the sequel, with the conduct which, under like circumstances, was observed towards Perry.

A most distressing circumstance attended Perry's service in command of the flotilla at Newport, in the loss of his excellent and warmly-attached friend and shipmate, Lieutenant Blodgett. He had got under way at noon on the twenty-ninth of October, in gunboat number forty-six, to look round outside of the harbour. The wind was light from northeast when he started, but it came on to blow heavily when he had reached the open ocean off the mouth of the harbour. He immediately hauled his wind, and commenced working back for the mouth of the harbour. The swell setting heavily along the shore, and the tide running ebb, the schooner, which, like most of the gunboats, was dull and sluggish, worked slowly to windward. Still Blodgett did not like to bear up and run into the Sound, which was his only alternative. He continued to beat to windward, standing close in to the shore to avoid the tide and prolong the benefit of the long tack. In attempting to tack off the lighthouse on the south point of the island of Conanicut, the schooner missed stays; a second attempt was made to tack her, which equally failed; and a last effort was made to veer her, in the hope that, though very close in, she might still clear the rocks. The schooner paid off a little, when the undertow neutralizing the effect of the helm, she went broadside to against the rocks. The sea now made a complete breach over the vessel. Blodgett at once saw that there was not the slightest hope of saving the

vessel, and far from a certainty of saving the lives of the crew, for the night had just set in, and the weather was cold. It would depend entirely on the personal exertion of each to get ashore before the vessel should go to pieces, and he accordingly gave the order for each man to provide for his own safety, being determined not to leave the vessel himself until every man should gain the shore; in short, not to be saved himself if one of his crew were lost. He was soon after washed overboard, and his body was never recovered; nine others, out of eighteen composing the crew, shared the fate of their commander. Perry briefly but feelingly narrated the circumstances to the secretary of the navy, and by the same mail communicated the mournful intelligence to Blodgett's father, expressing, in doing so, a melancholy satisfaction in being able to assure him that his son, in the last trying scene of his life, had acted with a firmness and decision most honourable to his memory. In Blodgett Perry lost an old, a sincere, and a warmly-attached friend, as well as a most useful assistant. Had he lived, he would doubtless have accompanied him to Lake Erie as his second in command, and shared the glory of a victory which the presence of an attached, courageous, and true-hearted coadjutor would have rendered of so much earlier achievement.

Towards the close of November Perry made another effort to procure service which would bring him in contact with the enemy, by using the personal solicitation at Washington of his intimate friend, Mr. W. S. Rogers, who went there for the purpose of settling Perry's accounts during the past five years. He at the same time addressed a letter to the secretary, which

is interesting as showing his desire for active employment anywhere, and having probably led to his being ordered to the Lakes. It ran as follows: "I have instructed my friend, Mr. W. S. Rogers, to wait on you with a tender of my services for the Lakes. There are fifty or sixty men under my command that are remarkably active and strong, capable of performing any service. In the hope that I should have the honour of commanding them whenever they should meet the enemy, I have taken unwearied pains in preparing them for such an event. I beg therefore, sir, that we may be employed in some way in which we can be serviceable to our country." He at the same time made an offer of his services to Commodore I. Chauncey, who had recently been appointed to command on the Lakes.

In the course of Mr. Rogers's interview with the secretary, some conversation occurred about employing Captain Perry on Lake Erie, to build and organize a squadron, to meet one which the enemy were about, preparing on that lake. Nothing definite, however, was decided; and, in a week after Perry's letter was written, the British frigate *Macedonian* arrived as a prize to the frigate *United States*, and in charge of his old shipmate and friend, Lieutenant William H. Allen. He received him also with cordial congratulations, lent him every assistance in providing for the comfort of the wounded, and furnished him with thirty men to assist in navigating the ship to New-York. In announcing her arrival at his station, he expressed to the secretary his opinion that she was one of the finest frigates he had ever seen. He had no disposition to disparage the victories of others, though it

caused him infinite grief that he was denied the opportunity of sharing them.

Soon after it was decided to increase the navy by four line-of-battle ships, six large frigates, and six sloops. He thought that commands of a higher class being thus provided for those of his own grade that were above him, some of the sloops would be left vacant. He had been so often disappointed, however, that he was not very sanguine; and, in writing to Captain Morris to announce that he had sent him some men, and to describe the character of one petty officer whom he had sent, whom he thought would make a good gunner, he says to him, "Does the government intend building the ships immediately, or will it wait until timber *seasons*? I despair of getting to sea very shortly, unless I should be fortunate enough to get the Hornet."

In order to nourish the faint chance of employment at sea which grew out of this contemplated advancement of his seniors, and, at the same time, to benefit his native state, to whose interests and welfare he was ever watchfully attentive, he now devoted himself to the task of obtaining accurate information as to the ship-building capabilities of his state. The result of his inquiries he reduced to a tabular form, stating in separate columns the quantity of suitable ship-timber, mines of iron ore, number of smelting forges and trip-hammers, and of ship-carpenters, joiners, rope and sail makers, and all the various descriptions of artisans employed in the construction and equipment of ships. He also mentioned the fact that there was a sufficiency of seasoned timber to construct a frigate, and that the mechanics, being unemployed, would work at low wages.

In January of 1813 he received a serious annoyance in learning the appointment of Lieutenant Allen, who had recently arrived in charge of the Macedonian, to the command of the brig Argus of twenty guns. This vessel had recently been commanded by master-commandant Arthur Sinclair, who, on the termination of his cruise, had relinquished the command of her. Commodore Decatur, who was senior officer afloat in New-York when the Argus arrived, placed Lieutenant Allen on board of her when Captain Sinclair left her, in the hope that he would subsequently be promoted and confirmed in the command, which, in fact, proved to be the case. This infringement of his just rights, and violation of the solemn promise made to him at the commencement of the war by the then secretary of the navy, and which was equally binding on the gentleman who had recently succeeded him, Perry felt most sensibly, as is apparent from the following letter to the new secretary of the navy, Mr. William Jones. It is dated on the twenty-ninth of January, 1813.

"I am informed by Lieutenant Allen that he has charge of the U. S. brig Argus, by order of Commodore Decatur. Although I have the highest opinion of Mr. Allen as an officer, and the warmest regard for him as a friend, yet justice to myself demands that I should solicit this vessel, provided Captain Sinclair is not to resume the command of her. On the first prospect of a declaration of war, I hastened to Washington in the hope of obtaining active employment; but, unfortunately, there was no vacancy. The honourable secretary of the navy, however, promised me the first one that should occur suitable to my rank; none has occurred until the present. I therefore hope, sir, I may

be gratified in being appointed to the Argus, as it is my earnest wish to have an opportunity of showing my devotion to the cause of my country. Mr. Allen has already had an opportunity of evincing his gallantry and good conduct, and is in possession of the admiration and respect of his countrymen."

On the same day he wrote to Captain Sinclair, stating the application he had made for the Argus, in the event only of Captain Sinclair's having entirely relinquished the command, as, in the contrary case, he had no wish whatever to interfere, but considered himself as standing next for the command. He wrote also to Mr. J. B. Howell, then a senator in Congress from Rhode Island, to explain the injustice which would be done to him by the appointment of his junior to the command of the Argus, and to procure his influence in aid of his claim. "Possessing," as he tells this gentleman, "an ardent desire to meet the enemies of my country, I have earnestly solicited this situation, and beg you will back my application to be employed in a manner more congenial to my feelings." His letter indicates an apprehension that some lingering distrust of him existed at the department with regard to the loss of the Revenge; for he forwarded a copy of the proceedings of the court of inquiry on the subject to Mr. Howell, with the expression of a hope that its perusal would satisfy him that no blame could attach to him from that unfortunate disaster. It gives pain thus to see Perry stooping to the office of self-vindication. To his friend Allen he frankly stated all that he had done, and forwarded to him a copy of his letter to the secretary on the same day that it was written. It is impossible to do otherwise than admire the noble

magnanimity of his conduct throughout this transaction. His "ardent desire to meet the enemies of his country" does not allow him for a moment to forget or disregard what was due to his brother officers; the injustice which was about to be done to himself quickens his sense of the delicacy that was due to others.

He had also indulged the hope of obtaining the command of the Hornet, in expectation of the probable promotion of Captain Lawrence, her commander; but, shortly before her return from her successful cruise, during which she had captured the Peacock, the means of distinction had already been provided for Perry. On the first of February, 1813, he received a letter from Commodore Chauncey, to whom, in the previous December, he had made a tender of his services, stating that he had applied to the secretary of the navy to have him ordered to the Lakes. The commodore took occasion to pay Perry the following compliment, which plainly indicates that his character was already recognized in the service, and understood by the commodore. "You are the very person," he writes, "that I want for a particular service, in which you may gain reputation for yourself and honour for your country." This particular service was the command of a naval force to be created on Lake Erie. In a few days he was advised by his friend Rogers that the new secretary of the navy, Mr. Jones, had readily consented to Commodore Chauncey's request, and decided to order him to Lake Erie, with a detachment of the best men under his command at Newport. He was to build two heavy brigs on the lake to meet the force prepared by the enemy. "You will doubtless," wrote Mr.

Rogers, "command in chief. This is the situation Mr. Hamilton mentioned to me two months past, and which, I think, will suit you exactly; you may expect some warm fighting, and, of course, a portion of honour.



CHAPTER VI.

Perry ordered to the Lakes.—Sends off Crews of Flotilla.—Visits his Parents.—Goes to Albany.—Joins Commodore Chauncey.—Proceeds to Sackett's Harbour.—Rumoured attack from the Enemy.—Perry detained on Lake Ontario.—Ordered to Erie.—His Journey.—Rumour of an Attack on Erie.—Arrival at that Place.—Condition of the Squadron.—Difficulties of Equipment.—Perry visits Pittsburgh.—Returns to Erie.—Visits Niagara.—Storming of Fort George.—Perry's Account of it.—Perry ordered to Black Rock.—Flotilla manned by Soldiers.—Labour of ascending Rapids.—Arrival at Buffalo.—Passing the British Squadron.—Arrival at Erie.—Preparation of the Squadron.—Want of Men.—Ordered to co-operate with General Harrison.—Urgent Letters from Government and the General.—Letter of entreaty to the Commodore for Men.—Invites him to assume the Command on Erie.—Contemplated Attack of the Enemy on Erie.—Perry receives small Re-enforcements.—Determines to sail in pursuit of the Enemy.

ON the seventeenth of February Captain Perry received orders from the secretary of the navy to proceed to Sackett's Harbour with all the best men under his command in the flotilla. At that place he was to receive farther instructions from Commodore Chauncey with regard to his future proceedings in command of the force to be created on Lake Erie. So prompt was he to execute these orders, and reach the scene where his friend had held out to him the prospect of hard fighting and an attendant harvest of honour, and so ready was the force under his command to move in any direction, that he sent off on that very day, notwithstanding the inclement season of the year, a detachment of fifty men and officers, under the command of sailing-master Almy.

They were to proceed to Albany by the way of Providence. On the nineteenth he despatched fifty men, under sailing-master Champlin, and the remaining fifty on the twenty-first, under sailing-master W. V. Taylor. His object in thus dividing them was to increase the facility of procuring conveyances for the men and accommodation on the road.

On the morning of the twenty-second of February, a day of happy omen for the commencement of an American enterprise, Captain Perry delivered up the command of the flotilla to the officer next in rank, and set forward on his journey to Sackett's Harbour. At that season of the year, and at that period in the settlement of the interior of our country, this was a journey of no little hardship and fatigue. He crossed the ferry to Narragansett in his boat during a violent rain storm, and immediately proceeded to Pawcatuck, and thence to New-London and Lebanon; his object in following this route being to visit his parents, who resided at the latter place, before his departure on so perilous a service, and from which his return was so uncertain. After passing a few hours with his family, he departed for Hartford in the evening in an open sleigh, taking with him his brother Alexander, then a lad of less than twelve years. The cold was intense, and they suffered severely before their arrival at Hartford, which they only reached at midnight. There Captain Perry got on the mail-route to Albany, and made the rest of the journey in a somewhat more comfortable manner.

Commodore Chauncey had come from Lake Ontario to New-York during the winter, and had written to Captain Perry from that place to direct him to repair

forthwith to Sackett's Harbour, where he was urgently desirous of seeing him. As the commodore had not yet arrived at Albany, Captain Perry determined to wait for him there, in order to be sooner made acquainted with his wishes. At the end of three days the commodore arrived at Albany. In the afternoon of the same day, being the twenty-eighth of February, Captain Perry set out for Sackett's Harbour, by direction of the commodore, who started at the same time, and arrived there on the evening of the third of March. The same night the alarm gun was fired to announce an attack. Captain Perry hastened on board the Madison, where he found the crew at their quarters, and everything in good order. The commodore, who had also arrived during the night, made his appearance soon after. The alarm had been occasioned by a sentinel's firing at a person who attempted to pass his post.

It had been rumored that an attack would be made on Sackett's Harbour, in order to destroy the squadron and the vessels on the stocks, so as to give the British the command of the lake during the approaching campaign. On this account Commodore Chauncey detained Captain Perry with him until the sixteenth of March, notwithstanding his extreme desire to be at his post superintending the construction of his squadron. After having once or twice suggested the propriety of his proceeding to his destination, the commodore at length told him that it was possible an attack might be made on the vessels in the harbour, in which case the commodore said he would like to have his assistance, and presumed he, Perry, would also wish to be there. This, Perry said, was conclusive.

On the sixteenth of March, however, he received orders to proceed to Erie, and hasten the equipment of the squadron then in process of construction there. On the twenty-fourth he arrived at Buffalo, and, after having passed a day in examining the navy-yard at Black Rock, then under the command of Lieutenant Pettigru, and made arrangements for having stores forwarded to Erie, he set out on the twenty-sixth in a sleigh, on the ice, for Erie. At Cattaraugus, where he passed the night, he learned from the keeper of the hotel in which he lodged that he had recently been on the Canada shore, where particular inquiries had been made as to the vessels to be constructed at Erie, and the force stationed there for their protection. The innkeeper inferred that an attempt would be made by the British to destroy the vessels when the ice should break up.

In the evening of the twenty-seventh Perry reached Erie, and immediately called around him the persons engaged in building and equipping the squadron. These were Mr. Noah Brown of New-York, the master shipwright, and sailing-master Dobbins, who superintended the construction by direction of Commodore Chauncey. He found that the keels of the two twenty-gun brigs were laid, and that two gunboats were nearly planked; a third was ready also for planking. Captain Perry learned, equally to his astonishment and regret, that no arrangements had been made for bringing up such of the guns for the vessels as were to come from Buffalo and Black Rock, and that no orders on the subject had been received from the commodore. This was the more to be lamented, as the ice was already so weak as to render it impossible

to bring them up on it, and the roads were impassable for heavy cannon. No preparations whatever had been made for the defence of these vessels had they been attacked; there was not a single musket or cartridge in the possession of the officer who had been in charge, or, in fact, in the village; and nothing would have been easier, nor, as it afterward proved, better worth attention, than for the enemy to have destroyed the vessels. A party of fifty carpenters, which had been sent on from Philadelphia, had not yet arrived, though they had been four weeks on their journey. The twenty-five who came on with Mr. Brown had made the journey in a fortnight. Captain Perry provided that very night for the most urgent of these wants, by hiring a guard of citizens to protect the vessels, which he organized and set on watch. He directed Mr. Dobbins to proceed to Buffalo on the following day, and bring on forty seamen from the navy-yard; also some muskets and cartridges, and, if possible, two twelve-pounders; and wrote, before going to rest, to the navy-agent in Pittsburgh, to hurry on the missing carpenters the moment they should appear, and to forward a number of articles required by the builder.

These deficiencies, and the distance from which they were to be supplied, convey a lively idea of the arduous nature of the undertaking with which Captain Perry had been intrusted; that of creating a squadron in this remote and thinly-peopled region. Mechanics, seamen, guns, sailcloth, almost everything necessary to the equipment of ships, had to be brought, at that season, a distance of five hundred miles, through a half-settled country, destitute of good roads,

and but partially intersected by water communication. About one thousand pounds of iron was procured from Buffalo. The additional iron necessary for the construction of the vessels and for mounting their batteries was picked up by scraps in the neighbouring smithies, and welded together for the heavy work. Thus the pivot bolts of the carronades were made of three quarters of an inch iron. To perform the extra quantity of iron-work which the deficiency of large rods and bars occasioned, was attended with great difficulty. Five blacksmiths had been ordered from Philadelphia, and only two came, one of them being only a striker to the other. Fortunately, some blacksmiths were afterward found among the militia capable of doing the common work.

Although in our own country, we were, in fact, farther from our resources on the Lakes than the English. To be sure the ocean intervened for them; but the trouble of crossing it was as nothing to this laborious and most costly transportation. The power and ambition of England had long since accumulated in the Canadas every munition of war, while our frontier was entirely destitute of whatever was necessary for the construction or armament of ships. If the contest were now to be repeated, we should enter it with far greater ability to meet and overpower our opponents. While the facilities for the rapid transportation of the heaviest commodities have immeasurably increased, the development of the population, wealth, and power of our lake frontier would enable us to procure all the means of naval warfare on the spot. Ships ready built, and seamen to navigate them, steamers, and all the elements

of maritime power, would be found ready for employment.

On the evening of the thirtieth of March, sailing-master W. V. Taylor arrived from Sackett's Harbour with twenty officers and men. Captain Perry determined at once to leave Mr. Taylor in charge of the vessels at Erie, and proceed to Pittsburg in order to hasten on the carpenters, and procure some necessary stores which had not yet been obtained. He accordingly set out the next day, and arrived at Pittsburgh on the fourth of April. He immediately made arrangements for procuring canvass for the sails of his squadron from Philadelphia; for an unnecessary delay had been incurred in order to discover whether the canvass could not be procured at Pittsburgh. Captain Perry passed two days in visiting the workshops of the different mechanics employed in working for his squadron, and giving them minute directions as to the manner of preparing the articles that had been ordered, and with the manufacture of which they were wholly unacquainted. He also procured from Captain A. R. Woolley, the commissary of ordnance of the army, the loan of four small guns and some muskets for the defence of Erie, in case he should be disappointed in receiving those he had ordered from Buffalo; and this gentleman also kindly volunteered to superintend the casting of the shot which would be required for the squadron. He subsequently rendered great assistance in supplying military stores for the fleet, and received the warmest thanks of Perry. With regard to the carpenters, he found, to his annoyance, that, while they had passed on to Erie by land, their tools had been sent by water, and would

not probably arrive so soon as they. The block-makers from Philadelphia had also got separated from their tools, which had not yet arrived. Having urgently impressed on the various persons engaged in supplying articles for the squadron the necessity of having them finished by the first of May, he set out from Pittsburgh on the seventh of April, and reached Erie on the tenth. He found the vessels much advanced in their construction since his departure, but the muskets and cartridges which he had ordered from Buffalo had not arrived, as they could not be procured in that place. The forethought which had induced him to procure muskets and cannon at Pittsburgh, as an additional precaution for the defence of his vessels while building, was thus fully justified, and, ere long, he was able to prepare such ample means of resistance as to secure to the assailants a warm reception should they attempt the destruction of the vessels. At his earnest request, General Meade, the commanding officer in the neighbourhood, caused five hundred militia to be stationed at Erie to assist in its defence.

Early in May the three gunboats were launched and equipped for service, and the two brigs, the keels of which were but just laid when Captain Perry arrived at Erie towards the close of March, were now nearly planked up, with the prospect of being ready to be launched in the course of three weeks. They were, in fact, launched on the twenty-fourth of May. The frames of the vessels were of white and black oak and chestnut, the outside planking of oak, and the decks of pine. The trees were cut down on the spot, sawed up, and often, on the same day, became part of the vessels. The brigs were one hundred and forty-one

feet in their greatest length, thirty feet beam; they measured about five hundred tons each, and were pierced for twenty guns.

At this conjuncture Captain Perry made a sudden visit to Lake Ontario. The occasion which called him there, and the circumstances which attended his visit, are briefly and sententiously described in a copy of a letter, probably to his parents, left among his papers. As it is by far the most detailed account he has left of the affairs in which he took part, for he had an almost invincible aversion to the use of his pen, and as the whole document, and the actions which it describes, are strikingly characteristic of the man, we cannot offer a higher gratification to the reader than by transcribing it, or furnish him with a truer idea of the subject of this biography.

"On the evening of the twenty-third of May, I received information, about sunset, that Commodore Chauncey would in a day or two arrive at Niagara, when an attack would be made on Fort George. He had previously promised me the command of the seamen and marines that might land from the fleet. Without hesitation, I determined to join him. I left Erie about dark in a small four-oared open boat. The night was squally and very dark. After encountering head winds and many difficulties, I arrived at Buffalo on the evening of the twenty-fourth, refreshed, and remained there until daylight; I then passed the whole of the British lines in my boat within musket-shot. Passing Strawberry Island, several people on our side of the river hailed and beckoned me on shore. On landing, they pointed out about forty men on the end of Grand Island, who doubtless were placed there to intercept

boats. In a few moments I should have been in their hands. I then proceeded with more caution. As we arrived at Schlosser it rained violently. No horse could be procured. I determined to push forward on foot; walked about two miles and a half, when the rain fell in such torrents I was obliged to take shelter in a house at hand. The sailors whom I had left with the boat, hearing of public horses on the commons, determined to catch one for me. They found an old pacing one which could not run away, and brought him in, rigged a rope from the boat into a bridle, and borrowed a saddle without either stirrup, girth, or crupper. Thus accoutred, they pursued me, and found me at the house where I had stopped. The rain ceasing, I mounted; my legs hung down the sides of the horse, and I was obliged to steady the saddle by holding by the mane. In this style I entered the camp, it raining again most violently. Colonel Porter being the first to discover me, insisted upon my taking his horse, as I had some distance to ride to the other end of the camp, off which the Madison lay.

"After innumerable difficulties, I reached the ship on the evening of the twenty-fifth, most unexpectedly to the commodore and all the officers of the squadron, who were assembled to receive orders. The commodore appeared delighted to see me, shook me cordially by the hand, and observed that 'no person on earth at that particular time could be more welcome.' This remark he more than once repeated. As soon as we were alone he informed me of all his plans. They were really judicious, and I had nothing to offer in addition. In the morning, the commodore and myself, in the pilot-boat schooner *Lady of the Lake*, re-

connioured the enemy's batteries with care and attention, and made the necessary arrangements for the disposition of the vessels of the squadron. We then called on General Dearborn, and the commodore urged the necessity of an attack the next morning, to which the general, who appears to place unlimited confidence in the commodore, immediately assented, and issued the general order, which you will find published in the Buffalo Gazette of the seventh of June, signed by Winfield Scott, adjutant-general. The last clause places the landing of the troops under the direction of Commodore Chauncey. The commodore informed General Dearborn, as well as generals Lewis, Boyd, Chandler, and Winder, that this duty would be performed by me.

"In the afternoon the commodore asked me to go with him and see the different generals, and arrange the plan of debarkation. We met them together, when the commodore told them I was appointed to superintend the landing of the troops; with which they politely expressed their satisfaction. I asked the general if he would be so good as to explain how he wanted his men landed; in fact, to show me his order of battle. I then could arrange the boats so as to place the troops on shore at any given time or place. He said really he had no order of battle more than the general order; that he had only received that a few hours before, and had made no arrangements. I then endeavoured to show them the manner in which I thought the boats should be formed to land the troops with the most expedition, and so as to prevent loss; which was, with the advance guard in one line, the boats being separated fifty feet; each brigade formed in one line,

with the same distance between the boats. By this means the fire of the enemy would not have such an effect as if the boats were in close order and in several lines. General Winder, who is their scientific man, had taken it into his head to advance with his brigade formed into three lines; and all the arguments the commodore and I could make use of could not convince him, although he said he would land as I might direct. Finding that they had no plan, that they hardly knew what they were going at, when we had taken leave, I observed to the commodore I did not wish to have anything to do with them, as no credit could be gained; the boats would be rowed by soldiers, who would know less than their generals, and that their misconduct, should any disaster happen, would attach to me. He agreed with me, and said he did not mean to place me in so awkward a situation; that they might get on shore as they could. I, at the same time, told him I would go in with the advanced guard, and assist Colonel Scott with my advice. Colonel M'Comb, who lives on board the ship with the commodore, and is really a soldier, and, at the same time, a modest man, came down from the general's quarters with us. Seeing me smile, he observed, 'I see you are amused to see what system and order our generals observe. I wish to God the commodore commanded the army as well as the navy!'

"It was eventually arranged that five hundred seamen and marines should be landed from the vessels, to be under my command, to act with Colonel M'Comb's regiment. The seamen were only to use the boarding-pike. Thus we had everything arranged on our part. At three in the morning we were called.

It was calm, with a thick mist. At daylight the commodore directed the schooners to take the stations which had been previously assigned them as soon as possible, and commence a fire upon the enemy's batteries. At the same time, he asked me if I would go on shore, see General Lewis, hurry the embarkation, and bring the general off with me. This I did. I found that many of the troops had not yet got into their boats. General Lewis accompanied me on board the Madison. General Dearborn had gone on board previously. The ship was under way, with a light breeze from the eastward, quite fair for us; a thick mist hanging over Newark and Fort George, the sun breaking forth in the east, the vessels all under way, the lake covered with several hundred large boats, filled with soldiers, horses, and artillery, advancing towards the enemy, altogether formed one of the grandest spectacles I ever beheld. The breeze now freshened a little, which soon brought us opposite the town of Newark. The landing-place fixed upon was about two miles from the town, up the Niagara. The commodore, observing some of the schooners taking a wrong position, requested me to go in shore and direct them where to anchor. I immediately jumped into a small boat, and, in passing through the flat boats, I saw Colonel Scott, and told him I would be off to join him and accompany him on shore. When I got on board the Ontario, I found her situation and the Asp's, and directed them to be got under way and anchored at a place I pointed out to the commanding officers, where they could enfilade two forts. The enemy had no idea our vessels could come as near the shore as they did, many of them anchoring within

half musket-shot. I pulled along the shore within musket-shot, and observed a situation where one of the schooners could act with great effect. I directed her commander to take it. This was so that he could play directly in the rear of the fort. On opening his fire, the consequence was such as I had imagined. The enemy could not stand to load their guns, and were obliged to leave the fort precipitately. I then pulled off to the ship, and, after conversing with the commodore and General Dearborn, and observing to the latter that the boats of the advanced guard were drifting to leeward very fast; that they would, if not ordered immediately to pull to windward, fall too far to leeward to be under cover of the schooners, and would take those in the rear still farther to leeward, he begged of me to go and get them to windward. I jumped into my boat and pulled for the advanced guard, took Colonel Scott into my boat, and, with much difficulty, we convinced the officers and soldiers of the necessity of keeping more to windward.

"As soon as we got them into a proper situation, I pulled ahead for the schooner nearest in shore, and the advanced guard pushed for the shore. On getting alongside of the schooner, the man at the masthead told me the whole British army was rapidly advancing for the point of landing. Knowing many of the officers had believed the British would not make a stand, and, as they could not be seen by the boats, being behind a bank, I pulled as quick as possible to give Scott notice, that his men might not be surprised by the opening of the enemy's fire. He was on the right and the schooner on the left. This obliged me to pull the whole length of the line, and, as the boats

were in no regular order, I had to pull ahead of one and astern of another. Before I got up to Scott, although within a boat or two, the enemy appeared on the bank and gave us a volley. Nearly the whole of their shot went over our heads. Our troops appeared to be somewhat confused, firing without order and without aim. I was apprehensive they would kill each other, and hailed them to pull away for the shore, many of their boats having stopped rowing. They soon recovered, and pulled for the shore with great spirit. General Boyd led his brigade on in a very gallant manner, under a very heavy fire, it having suffered more severely than any other. Fortunately, the enemy, from apprehension of the fire from the schooners, kept back until our troops were within fifty yards of the shore; this deceived them, and their fire was thrown over our heads.

"I remained encouraging the troops to advance until the first brigade landed, when, observing the schooners did not fire briskly, from the apprehension of injuring our own troops, I went on board the Hamilton, of nine guns, commanded by Lieutenant Macpherson, and opened a tremendous fire of grape and canister. About the time I got on board the schooner, our troops had attempted to form on the bank; probably a hundred got up. They were obliged to retreat under the bank, where they were completely sheltered from the effect of the enemy's fire. The enemy could not stand the united effect of the grape and canister from the schooner, and of a well-directed fire from the troops, but broke and fled in great confusion, we plying them with round shot. Our troops then formed on the bank. General Lewis came on board the

schooner from the ship at this time. After waiting a few moments, and observing the disposition of things on shore, he landed. I landed at the same time."

This document is suited to shed no little lustre on the fame of Perry, and to exhibit his conduct and character in a new and admirable light. It may also serve to show us what kind of generals we are likely again to have, if we abolish our present admirable nursery of officers in the military academy at West Point, and trust once more to Providence and inspiration in the hour of battle for the necessary insight into military affairs. It will also be observed, that the names of Scott and M'Comb, mentioned by Perry with approbation, became afterward well known to fame. We see from Perry's account, that, availing himself of a promise of Commodore Chauncey to give him the command of the seamen and marines on Lake Ontario in the event of a descent on the enemy's territory, and of a moment when his presence at Erie could be dispensed with, he set out, voluntarily and without an order, at a moment's warning, at the beginning of a dark and squally night, in a small boat, to make a voyage of near one hundred miles over an inland sea subject to violent tempests. Arrived at Buffalo, we find him pursuing his adventurous course down the Niagara River, within musket-shot of the enemy's territory, and, after abandoning his boat near the Rapids, pursuing his way through the wilderness which skirted the bank, alone, on foot, and during a violent storm. It was thus, when the means of being useful were within his reach, that he manifested the "ardent desire to meet the enemies of his country" which he

had heretofore urged in his applications for active employment. The facts which he states with regard to his own movements during the attack on Fort George, show conclusively that its capture must have been in no inconsiderable degree owing to his indefatigable exertions in every quarter, his imperturbable calmness and presence of mind, and quick military perceptions. He seems to have exercised no control over the movements and disembarkation of the troops, as had been originally intended, from a hopelessness of procuring a concert of action on the part of the generals, and an unwillingness to bear the responsibility of failure. When, however, he discovered them falling into disorder, and drifting to leeward of the appointed landing-place, he pointed it out to the commanding general, and, forgetting his previous scruples, readily undertook, at his request, to remedy the evil. The ascendancy of a master mind was evident in the ready compliance which his directions met with, and in the way in which the soldiery rallied to his cries of encouragement. Invested at once with the authority of the general and commodore, and guided by the inspiration of an intuitive military conception, we find him hastily remodelling the order of the boats when in contact with the enemy, stationing anew the vessels where their fire would be most destructive, directing it in person, and flitting from point to point, wherever the circumstances of the day were critical or danger imminent. Commodore Chauncey, in his official report of the naval operations of the day, did ample justice to the services of Captain Perry, in joining him from Erie and volunteering his services; acknowledged the great assistance he had received from him in superin-

tending the debarkation of the troops, and said of him, in conclusion, that "he was present at every point where he could be useful, under showers of musketry, but fortunately escaped unhurt."

The capture of Fort George was attended by important consequences. It led almost immediately to the evacuation, by the British, of their whole frontier on the Niagara. Both banks being now in our possession, we were left in complete control of the navigation of the river. One of the fruits of this advantage was, that Captain Perry could now remove into Lake Erie five small vessels belonging to the government, which hitherto had been detained at Black Rock by the enemy's batteries on the Canada shore. He was despatched on this service by Commodore Chauncey on the twenty-eighth of May, with a party of officers and fifty seamen. The vessels had recently been fitted for service by Mr. Eckford, the naval constructor on Lake Ontario. One of them was the Caledonia, which Lieutenant Elliott had surprised and taken from the enemy some months before. The others had been purchased by him, in a situation where they could only become of use in the event of the enemy being driven from the opposite shore. This event, which could have been by no means certain, having actually occurred, Captain Perry was now able to remove these vessels into Lake Erie. The task, though unopposed by the enemy, was, however, one of no little difficulty. He was obliged to drag the vessels most laboriously against the current of the Niagara, which varied in strength from five to seven knots, by the aid of oxen and the exertions of his seamen, assisted by two hundred soldiers, under the

command of captains Brevoort and Young, lent by General Dearborn to assist in defending and navigating the vessels to Erie.

Having taken on board all the stores in the navy-yard at Black Rock, the vessels were tracked up the current; a toilsome task, which occupied near a fortnight, and of which, in writing to Commodore Chauncy, he pronounced the fatigue "almost incredible." On the evening of the fourteenth of June, he set sail from Buffalo for Erie. His little squadron consisted of the brig Caledonia, of three long twenty-four's, the schooners Somers, of two long thirty-two's, Tigress and Ohio, of one twenty-four pounder each, and the sloop Trippe, of one long thirty-two. The enemy having several years before commenced the creation of a naval force on Lake Erie, had, at the time, the complete command of the lake, on which it possessed a commissioned force more than six times greater than that with which Captain Perry was about to proceed to Erie in order to join the vessels in process of equipment there. The British force on the lake was commanded by Captain Finnis, a commander in the royal navy, and consisted of the ship Queen Charlotte, of four hundred tons and seventeen guns, the schooner Lady Prevost, of two hundred and thirty tons, mounting thirteen guns, the brig Hunter, of ten guns, the schooners Little Belt of three guns, and Chippeway, of one gun. To remove our insignificant flotilla from Buffalo to Erie, in the face of such an overpowering force, was a task of difficulty, requiring no little vigilance and address. By a skilful display of these qualities, Captain Perry succeeded, though narrowly watched, opposed by contrary winds, and suffering

from serious indisposition, in getting his vessels past the enemy and safely into the harbour of Erie, off which the enemy hove in sight as he was going in on the evening of the eighteenth. The British squadron and our flotilla had been in sight together during the day from Chatauque, about twenty miles from Erie; but the insignificance of our vessels had enabled them to pass unobserved.

The business of equipping the squadron now went rapidly forward; but, as yet, only one hundred and ten officers and men had arrived, including those brought up by the flotilla.

On Perry's arrival at Erie he found a letter from the secretary of the navy, highly complimentary of his conduct in the landing at Fort George, and of his exertions in preparing the force on Lake Erie. In reply, while he expressed a becoming sense of the responsibility of his situation, and doubts of his capacity to meet the expectation of the government, Perry assured the secretary of his ardent desire to possess the favourable opinion of the government and of his countrymen, and that no diligence or exertion of which he was capable should be wanting to promote the honour of the service. He informed the secretary that one of the brigs was completely rigged and had her battery mounted, the other would be equally far advanced in a week; the sails of both vessels were nearly completed, and, on the arrival of the shot and anchors from Pittsburgh, from which they were confidently expected soon, all the vessels would be ready for service in one day after the reception of the crews.

From fatigue and exposure in getting his flotilla from Black Rock to Buffalo, and want of rest while

passing the enemy on the lake, added to the effects of the climate, Captain Perry now became still more seriously indisposed. Many of his men were in the same condition. Writing to the commodore on the twenty-seventh of June, he tells him, "from sickness and other causes, we cannot muster more than fifty or sixty men who are of any service to us; these work almost day and night." Fortunately, Perry soon recovered sufficiently to attend to his urgent duties, though his health continued feeble while he remained on the lakes, and his exertions, of course, the more laborious. Of the fifty sick at this time, a considerable portion were the wounded and infirm from Black Rock. He considered thirty out of his one hundred and ten men not only entirely useless at the time, but likely to continue so.

On the tenth of July Captain Perry received a letter from General Dearborn, stating that he had explicit directions from the secretary of war to order the detachment of two hundred soldiers under Captain Brevoort, which had been lent to the squadron on Lake Erie, to return to Fort George, and requesting that they might be immediately sent to him. At the same time, he kindly offered that Captain Brevoort might remain attached to the squadron, if it were agreeable both to Captain Perry and to himself, as his familiarity with the navigation of Lake Erie and the upper Lakes might render him peculiarly useful. Captain Brevoort had been more than a year employed in navigating the brig Adams, employed by the war department in the transportation of military stores. This vessel had been captured by the British at Detroit, and called by them after the place where she

was taken. The detachment was accordingly sent to Buffalo on the following day, under Captain Younge; and the boats which took the party down were left to bring up the officers and men, now so anxiously expected from Lake Ontario, to man the squadron. Captain Brevoort remained to command the marines of the Niagara. To supply, in some measure, the deficiency occasioned by the withdrawal of the soldiers, Lieutenant J. Brooks, of the marine corps, was occupied in recruiting at Erie. He had previously brought on a small detachment recruited by him in Pittsburgh, and eventually succeeded in enlisting thirty marines.

On the twelfth of July Perry received and communicated to his officers the official news of the capture of the Chesapeake, and the death of her gallant commander and a number of his officers, together with the customary order to wear mourning. There had been much, however, in the quenchless heroism of Lawrence to sooth the painful feelings and gratify the pride of his countrymen. In his dying injunction, "Don't give up the ship," he bequeathed a watchword which was yet to herald them to victory. That his memory was not coupled with discouragement was soon after evinced by an order from the navy department to give his name to one of the brigs; and that which Perry had fixed on for his own was called the Lawrence. The other was called the Niagara.

Only five days after being called upon to relinquish the two hundred men which constituted the main force of his squadron, he received instructions to co-operate with General Harrison, commander-in-chief of the northwestern army, in support of the military move-

ments which he was making for the recovery of the territory of Michigan, and the invasion of Upper Canada. This order of the secretary's presupposed that the squadron at Lake Erie was ready for active service; and, of course, the issue of the necessary orders on the part of the government for officering and manning the squadron. These had actually been given to Commodore Chauncey, who commanded on Lake Erie as well as Lake Ontario, and the necessary officers and men placed at his disposal; but so absorbed was he in the interest of his immediate command, that the officers and men sent to him for distribution throughout the naval force subject to his orders, were retained almost exclusively where he was himself present. It seems to have been his intention to detain the crews until the vessels on Lake Erie were ready to sail, in the hope of being able, in the mean time, to overpower the enemy on Lake Ontario, and then repeat the same process in person on Lake Erie. But, independently of the disadvantage of keeping officers and men strangers to each other and to the vessels in which they were to sail until the moment they were to be engaged, it was expecting almost a miracle that the vessels should be equipped in so short a time by such a small number of men. But, strange as it may seem, by the unremitting zeal and exertions of the youthful commander, destitute almost entirely of subordinate officers, such as boatswains and gunners, and attending personally to the minutest details; and by the unceasing efforts of a handful of men, reduced by sickness both in numbers and strength, and sadly overworked, yet strangers to murmuring and almost without an attempt to desert, the vessels were now rigged, armed,

and ready for service. A considerable part of the shot had arrived from Pittsburgh; the anchors, which had not yet been received, were confidently expected in a week. On the day that Perry received these orders to co-operate with General Harrison, he wrote to Commodore Chauncey to communicate them, and expressed his confident assurance that the squadron would be ready, in all other respects, for service so soon as the necessary men could reach him. "I cannot," he says, "express to you the anxiety I feel respecting them." He also stated his great desire to have the services of the officers who were to join him, and especially of the commander of the second brig.

Having received an intimation that the men would soon be on their way—for he heard very seldom from Commodore Chauncey, and was chiefly indebted to rumour for a knowledge of his movements—he despatched a sailing-master to Buffalo on the eighteenth of July, with two boats, to be joined to the two which had been sent down with the detachment of troops, and with such others as could be procured, sufficient in number to bring up three hundred and fifty men, which was the number which Captain Perry expected from Lake Ontario to complete his crews. The officer was directed to use great vigilance in returning with the men, on account of the enemy's squadron, which was almost daily in sight off Erie, and might be considered as blockading the port; he was to keep close in shore, and call at two designated rendezvous, Chatauque and the Twenty-mile Creek, by the way, in order to receive instructions for his government. About this time we find him informing General Harrison, on the nineteenth of July, that he had at that date

one hundred and twenty officers and men fit for duty, and more than fifty on the sick list.

On the nineteenth of July Captain Perry received a second order from the secretary of the navy, evidently written under the belief that the squadron was manned, to co-operate with General Harrison. He had also received repeated communications from General Harrison with regard to his own critical situation, setting forth the important relief that the co-operation of the squadron would afford him, and urging the favourableness of the moment to strike a blow at the enemy's squadron before he should launch his new ship, the Detroit, which would turn the balance, and give the enemy a considerable superiority. The enemy had quite recently been strengthened by the arrival of Captain Barclay, a very distinguished officer, who had served under Nelson, and been with him at Trafalgar, to assume the chief command. He had also brought a number of experienced officers and a party of prime seamen. Still our squadron was for the moment superior in number of guns, and the vessels being now ready for service, had the crews been at hand, might have gone out with a confident hope of capturing the enemy. This hope Captain Perry expressed to the secretary of the navy in reply. He mentioned that the enemy were then off the harbour, and that, the moment a sufficient number of men arrived, he would be able to sail, and trusted that the issue of the contest would be favourable. He could only state to the secretary that he had but one hundred and twenty men fit for service, in addition to fifty sick; and offer to General Harrison the same reason for his inability to co-operate with him. The situation of Captain Perry,

and the bitter mortification which it occasioned him, can be best learned from the following urgent friendly appeal to the feelings of Commodore Chauncey.

"DEAR SIR,

"The enemy's fleet of six sail are now off the bar of this harbour. What a golden opportunity if we had men! Their object is no doubt either to blockade or attack us, or to carry provisions and re-enforcements to Malden. Should it be to attack us, we are ready to meet them. I am constantly looking to the eastward; every mail and every traveller from that quarter is looked to as the harbinger of the glad tidings of our men being on their way. I am fully aware how much your time must be occupied with the important concerns of the other lake. Give me men, sir, and I will acquire both for *you* and myself honour and glory on this lake, or perish in the attempt. Conceive my feelings; an enemy within striking distance, my vessels ready, and not men enough to man them. Going out with those I now have is out of the question. You would not suffer it were you here. I again ask you to think of my situation; the enemy in sight, the vessels under my command more than sufficient, and ready to make sail, and yet obliged to bite my fingers with vexation for want of men. I know, my dear sir, full well, you will send me the crews for the vessels as soon as possible; yet a day appears an age. I hope that the wind or some other cause will delay the enemy's return to Malden until my men arrive, and *I will have them.*"

Two days after this letter was written, the enemy

were becalmed off the harbour. Captain Perry immediately pulled out with three gunboats to endeavour to annoy them. He was only able to exchange a few shots with them, one of which struck the mizzen-mast of the Queen Charlotte, when a breeze springing up, they stood off. On the twenty-third of July Captain Perry received another communication from the secretary of the navy, urging upon him the importance of capturing or destroying the enemy's squadron. Captain Perry replied that he was fully aware of the importance of this object. That his ships were ready, but that he was without crews. He told the secretary that he could not describe to him the mortification which his situation occasioned him. Had the secretary, who had been so often informed of Captain Perry's deficiencies in this respect, ceased to depend upon the circuitous and reluctant transmission of seamen from Lake Ontario, after they had undergone what was familiarly known as "a Sackett's Harbour examination," he might have sent any number of officers and seamen direct from Philadelphia in less time than they could be forwarded from Sackett's Harbour. A little self-dependence, and a determination which would have cost but a moment's reflection and the dash of a pen on the part of the secretary, would have saved all this trouble and delay, and the jeopardy of important national interests. But the history of no country could possibly furnish more abundant instances of official imbecility and mismanagement than ours. This has ever been most apparent in whatever relates to the navy.

At length on the twenty-third of July, Captain Perry received a re-enforcement of seventy men and

officers, and immediately wrote in the following friendly terms to Commodore Chauncey:

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have this moment had the very great pleasure of receiving yours by Mr. Champlin, with the seventy men. The enemy are now off this harbour with the Queen Charlotte, Lady Prevost, Chippeway, Erie, and Friend's Good Will. My vessels are all ready; for God's sake, and *yours*, and mine, send me men and officers, and I will have them all in a day or two. Commodore Barclay keeps just out of the reach of our gunboats. I am not able to ship a single man at this place. I shall try for volunteers for our cruise. Send on the commander, my dear sir, for the Niagara. She is a noble vessel. Woolsey, Brown, or Elliott I should like to see amazingly. I am very deficient in officers of every kind. Send me officers and men and honour is within our grasp. The vessels are all ready to meet the enemy the moment they are officered and manned. Our sails are bent, provisions on board, and, in fact, everything is ready. Barclay has been bearding me for several days; I long to have at him. However anxious I am to reap the reward of the labour and anxiety I have had on this station, I shall rejoice, whoever commands, to see this force on the lake, and surely I had rather be commanded by my friend than by any other. Come, then, and the business is decided in a few hours. Barclay shows no disposition to avoid the contest."

This was, indeed, a touching appeal to the generosity of Chauncey, which might well have been

awakened by that which Perry displayed in tendering to him the fruits of his exertions, a triumph prepared by his own unparalleled toils and unceasing anxiety. Though Lake Erie was as much within the command of Commodore Chauncey as Lake Ontario, he did not probably like to leave his more extensive command on Lake Ontario, in the presence of an active and ingenious enemy. Otherwise he might easily have repaired to Lake Erie with such a re-enforcement of officers and men as would have secured his triumph on that lake, and subsequently brought back with him the means of obtaining a second triumph on Lake Ontario. Commodore Chauncey did indeed intend to assume in person the command of the force on Lake Erie, but postponed the time until after he should have first beaten the enemy on Lake Ontario.

A consideration of the state of the war on our northern and northwestern frontier at this particular period might well authorize the opinion that Commodore Chauncey would have been justified in taking advantage of Perry's generous offer, conceived in the true spirit of patriotism and devotion to the welfare of his country, and repairing to Lake Erie with a sufficient force of officers and men to decide the contest for superiority immediately in our favour. The fate of General Harrison's army was entirely dependent upon that of our squadron on Lake Erie. The British, being victorious by land and water on our northwestern frontier, would have found themselves at once at the head of our great navigable rivers, in a situation to descend into the heart of our country, and give it over to devastation and all the horrors of savage warfare, from which the territory of Michi-

gan was then fatally suffering. Had Commodore Chauncey left Lake Ontario temporarily, his successor could have imitated the defensive policy hitherto pursued by the enemy. In the interest of the fame of Perry, we cannot but rejoice that Commodore Chauncey should have declined repairing to Lake Erie. Had he gone, it could scarcely have been better for the country—it would have been sadly in abatement of the fame of Perry.

About this time, a concentration of the enemy's troops about Long Point, which lies opposite to Erie on the Canada shore, at a distance of only thirty miles, and the disappearance of the British squadron in the same direction, led to the belief than an attack on Erie was intended, with a view to the capture or destruction of Perry's squadron before the arrival of his crews, and of the military stores collected at Erie to be embarked on board of the squadron for the use of the northwestern army. Captain Perry called on Major-general Meade of the militia for a re-enforcement of troops, and made every necessary preparation for the reception of the enemy. The officers were all kept on board, and boats rowed guard throughout the night. Great consternation prevailed among the villagers, who hastened to send their families and valuables to the interior. Perry acquainted the secretary of the navy and the commodore with the fact of his being menaced with an attack, and having taken measures to repel it, assuring them that he had no fears for the vessels, even if the enemy should get possession of the town, which he considered unlikely. It was subsequently known from Commodore Barclay that an attack had, in fact, been at this

time contemplated and matured, but failed through the want of a sufficient sustaining force of troops at the proper moment.

On the twenty-seventh of July, Captain Perry received a letter by express from assistant adjutant-general Holmes, informing him, by order of General Harrison, that the enemy had invested Fort Meigs a second time with a heavy force. He stated that the presence of the enemy's squadron off Erie was considered most unfortunate, unless Captain Perry should be able to either fight or elude it; and that he was directed to recommend it, as the general's opinion, that it should be Captain Perry's great object to co-operate immediately with the army by sailing up Lake Erie. If this co-operation could be effected, the enemy would be compelled either to retreat precipitately, or suffer the ultimate necessity of surrendering. The adjutant-general concluded his letter as follows: "I feel great pleasure in conveying to you an assurance of the general's perfect conviction that no exertion will be omitted on your part to give the crisis an issue of profit and glory to the arms of our country."

Here was new evidence of the importance attached to his early co-operation with the northwestern army, and of the responsibility which weighed upon him; new stimulus to his ardent desire to meet the enemy, and new subject for mortification, that, while supposed everywhere to be ready to act, and pressed on all sides to put forth on the lake, he was yet unable to move for want of men. He mentioned to the general, in reply, his inexpressible mortification at his deficiency of officers and men; stated that he had, some days

before, sent an express to Commodore Chauncey, urging him to send the crews immediately; and that he had now forwarded him a copy of the general's letter, accompanied by a still more urgent request to the same effect.

His urgent letter to Commodore Chauncey was in the following words; and it is interesting, inasmuch as it drew from the commodore a reply which occasioned Perry to request to be removed from Lake Erie:

"SIR,

"I have this moment received by express the enclosed letter from General Harrison. If I had officers and men, and I have no doubt you will send them, I could fight the enemy, and proceed up the lake. But, having no one to command the Niagara, and only one commissioned lieutenant and two acting lieutenants, whatever my wishes may be, going out is out of the question. The men that came by Mr. Champlin are a motley set, blacks, soldiers, and boys. I cannot think you saw them after they were selected. I am, however, pleased to see anything in the shape of a man."

On the thirtieth of July he received from Lake Ontario an additional re-enforcement of sixty officers and men. Two days after he opened a rendezvous for landsmen, to serve four months, or until after a decisive battle, at ten dollars a month. He thus carried the total of his force, after landing the confirmed invalids, to about three hundred officers and men, to man two twenty-gun brigs and eight smaller vessels, mounting together fifteen guns, and making an aggregate of fifty-five guns. These men were, moreover,

in general, of the most inferior description, constituting the refuse of all that had arrived on Lake Ontario; many of them debilitated by recent disease, and more than a fifth of them incapacitated by fevers and dysentery from any duty. With regard to officers, the above letter to Commodore Chauncey shows how deficient he was. In fact, he stated to the secretary of the navy, in a letter of the thirtieth of July, that he had not sufficient officers of experience even to navigate the vessels. Nevertheless, in view of the critical situation of the northwestern army, and of all that was expected from him by those who were unacquainted with his deficiencies; stimulated by his impatience under the daily "bearding" of Commodore Barclay, who was almost perpetually in sight, with his colours displayed in defiance; and beginning, perhaps, to have more doubt than he had expressed that Commodore Chauncey would send him the deficient officers and men, he determined to set sail with those that he had, and such volunteers as he could procure from the army, and put all to the issue of a battle, which he was especially anxious should be fought before the enemy's squadron should be re-enforced by his new and heavy ship the Detroit, which had been launched on the seventeenth of July, and might soon be expected to appear on the lake, and which would give to the enemy a great superiority in tonnage as well as in number of guns.

In estimating the hardihood of Perry's determination to fight at once with a squadron but half manned with the worst materials, and these half crews further reduced by sickness, we must also take into consideration that there could have been but little leisure

for exercising the guns or training the boarders, pike-men, sail-trimmers, and firemen to the various duties essential to the offensive and defensive operations of a naval engagement. When the able-bodied men of the squadron were kept working incessantly almost by day and night, humanity, as well as the duty of preserving them from utter exhaustion, forbade any exertion, however essential, not connected with the urgent occupations of the moment. Still opportunity had been found, during the last few days that the squadron remained within the harbour of Erie, to station the crews carefully at quarters, and to give them a general idea of all their duties. During several hours of each of these days the men were exercised thoroughly at the guns, and Perry went round in person to see that each man understood his peculiar duty; that the evolutions for loading and firing were properly performed; the arrangements perfect for passing powder without risk or confusion; and that the tubes, matches, and powder-horns were in readiness for service. The commander who delegates these duties to others, who fails to attend in person to whatever concerns the fighting department of his vessel, may fatally regret his misplaced confidence in the hour of battle.



CHAPTER VII.

Rise of Naval Armaments on Erie.—Character of the Lake.—Nature of Harbours.—Erie well chosen for Building our Squadron.—Difficulty of Crossing the Bar.—Judicious Preparations.—Labour of getting the Lawrence over.—Enemy appear off the Harbour.—Disappear.—Our Squadron on the open Lake.—Prepare for Battle.—Sail in Pursuit.—Return to Erie.—Arrival of Re-enforcements.—Letter from Commodore Chauncey.—Perry considers it insulting.—Tenders Resignation of his Command.—Commodore Chauncey promises Marines.—Reserves them for his own Ship.—Squadron sails for Sandusky.—Visit from General Harrison.—Perry goes off Malden.—Offers Battle.—Anchors in Put-in Bay.—Illness of Perry.—Receives Re-enforcements.—Re-covers.—Visits Malden and Sandusky.—Reproachful Letter from Secretary.—Perry's Defence.

LAKE ERIE, about to become the scene of great national events, had hitherto been only navigated by our countrymen in pursuit of commerce. The canoe of the savage or the light bark of the trader had almost alone traversed its hitherto peaceful surface. But now war was to visit it, and the solitudes of nature, as yet accustomed only to reverberate the thunders of Heaven, were to be disturbed by the more terrible engines of human wrath. The American Fur Company had, in recent years, constructed one or two vessels for the purpose of transporting the articles which it trafficked with the Indians for peltries to the head of navigation at the upper lakes, and bringing down its valuable returns. These vessels had a slight armament. The Northwestern Company, on the other side of the lake, had also armed

vessels of considerable size. More recently, the British government had built several vessels, especially intended for cruisers, to give them the command of the lake in the event of a war with the United States. The Queen Charlotte had been built with this view as early as 1808, and some of the small vessels at an earlier period. These vessels were originally manned with provincial seamen, and officered likewise by provincials belonging to a special corps disconnected from the royal navy. They had cruised a good deal on the lake, were familiar with its coasts, and practised in the management of their vessels. In several trifling encounters, and particularly in annoying General Hull's army while in Canada, this provincial force had exhibited great skill and enterprise.

With regard to this new arena of naval warfare almost in the heart of the wilderness, it may be well briefly to state that the lake is about two hundred and eighty miles long from the outlet of the Miami to the Falls of Niagara, with a breadth varying from fifteen to sixty miles, and a depth scarcely anywhere exceeding twenty fathoms. Its shores are generally sandy or rock-bound, and therefore dangerous to the navigator. On the northern shore, the extraordinary course of the Thames River, running nearly parallel to the course of the lake, at no great distance and in the contrary direction to its current, cuts off all the streams, and accounts for the almost total absence on that side of inlets and harbours. On the American side the harbours are more numerous, but all of them have bars except that of Put-in Bay in the Bass Islands, which is accessible for vessels drawing twelve feet. At the mouth of the Sandusky there was a

pretty good harbour, but that at Erie was much better. Its comparative proximity, moreover, to the populous portion of Pennsylvania, and especially the great manufacturing town of Pittsburgh, between which and the neighbourhood of Erie there was an almost uninterrupted, though tedious, water communication by the Alleghany and its tributaries, gave it great advantages for the equipment of a naval force. Besides, being situated towards the center of the lake, which became broad at that point, it rendered the squadron less exposed to a surprise and destruction by the enemy than it would have been at Buffalo, which, in fact, was taken and burned in the course of the war. Buffalo, too, at that time had no good harbour, that which now exists there being almost entirely a work of art. Erie, on the contrary, had a beautiful natural harbour, consisting of a bay, very narrow at the entrance, but expanding into a spacious sheet of water within. This bay is formed by a peninsula, extending in the form of a crab's claw in a northeasterly direction along the shore of the lake. From this remarkable point of land, the place had received from the French its previous name of Presquile. Across the mouth there was a bar, extending lakeward upward of a mile, and varying in depth in the channel from six feet at the shoalest part to ten feet. The shoal, being formed of light sand, was liable to be affected by gales of wind, which occasioned it frequently to vary, and sometimes reduced the depth as low as five and even four feet.

This bar, being too shoal for the enemy to cross it with his vessels equipped and armed, had offered great protection to our squadron from attack during

its construction and equipment. Now, however, that the squadron was ready to sail, it became a serious impediment, inasmuch as it would be indispensable to raise the two brigs bodily at least four feet higher than their usual draught of nine feet, in order to enable them to pass the bar. This, of course, could only be done by the removal of their armament, and in smooth water; and as it was within the option of the enemy's commander then blockading the port, as it was surely his interest, to attack our squadron at disadvantage, while engaged in crossing the bar, partially divested of its armament, and in the perplexity and embarrassment of laborious efforts unfavorable to defence, Captain Perry surely expected to be engaged by the enemy while in the act of removing his vessels to the open lake. That he did so is evident from the conclusion of a letter to the secretary of the navy, dated on the twenty-seventh of July, in which he says, "We are ready to sail the instant officers and men arrive; and, as the enemy appear determined to dispute the passage of the bar with us, the question as to the command of the lake will soon be decided."

The measures adopted by Captain Perry in meeting this trying and dangerous emergency were of the most judicious character, and equally creditable to his distinguished skill as a seaman, and to his military genius and hardihood. Two large canoes, or scows, of sufficient capacity to displace a given quantity of water, and lift the brigs four feet after the removal of their armament, had been previously constructed by Mr. Brown, to fit exactly the shape of the brigs, and, enclosing them at the bow and stern, to meet towards the center. A water-battery of three long

twelves had also been mounted on the beach, opposite the shoalest part of the bar, to assist in the protection of the vessels while in the act of crossing.

Meantime, the enemy continued in the offing, displaying his colours, with a commodore's broad pendant at the main of the Queen Charlotte; from which it appears that our opponents, though so far from the scene of action, were not guilty of the absurdity of making their commander on Lake Erie wholly subordinate to the commander on Lake Ontario. On the second of August Commodore Barclay suddenly withdrew his vessels, and stood out of sight in the direction of the Canada shore. They were still absent on the morning of Sunday, the first of August, when the commodore weighed with eight of his squadron, and beat down to near the bar in readiness for crossing. About to undertake with such slender means an object of so much national importance, Perry, who had ever a deep sense of our dependance on a controlling and overruling Providence, now invoked protection and aid from the God of battles. A clergyman, whose ministration he had attended on shore, came off by invitation to the Lawrence; and, the officers of the squadron being assembled, the banner of the cross was raised high above the ensign, and the sacred offices commenced. The man of God plead devoutly for the triumph of our just cause; for our success in wresting the tomahawk and scalping-knife from savage hands, and subduing the ruthless foe who had encouraged and armed them for the slaughter. He then, in an appropriate address, set forth all the motives of humanity, of patriotism, of what depended on them for the rescuing of outraged altars and the diffusion of

Christianity, and bade them go forth conquering and to conquer. The feelings of all were affected and elevated by the solemn rites, and the contemplative mind of Perry seemed confirmed in its calm and steadfast enthusiasm.

In the afternoon Major-general Meade, of the militia, who had lent all the aid in his power in the defence and equipment of the squadron, visited the Lawrence with his suite, and was received with a salute of fifteen guns. Throughout the day a great concourse of people from the neighbouring country, scarcely any of whom had ever before seen a square-rigged vessel, lined the shore of the lake, filled with astonishment at the strangeness of the spectacle.

Early in the morning of Monday the second, Perry ordered five of the small vessels to cross the bar, anchor without it, and clear for action; the sixth, with the Niagara, to anchor one on each side of the channel close within the bar, and spring their broadsides lake-ward, in readiness to open on the enemy, should they appear, and cover the passage of the Lawrence. The vessels had been towed to the bar, when, to the great annoyance of Captain Perry, he found that the lake was considerably below its usual level; that there was only four feet water on the bar instead of six, and that it would be necessary to lighten even the small vessels to get them over. Still, the smoothness of the lake and the absence of the enemy induced him to proceed. While the small vessels were getting over, the guns of the Lawrence, with the exception of one or two to assist in her defence, were hoisted out, with their charges in them, and placed in boats, which were dropped astern. The camels were

then got alongside, and the water allowed to run into them until their tops were nearly level with the surface. The camels were then lashed together, and solid blocks arranged on top of them, so as to reach the ends of stout spars which had been laid across the Lawrence through her ports, and securely lashed down to the frame of the vessel. This being arranged, the pumps were set at work in the scows, which raised gradually, lifting the brig with them as the water was discharged. In this way the Lawrence was lifted three feet, which, with what she had raised on the removal of her armament, reduced her draught to about four feet. When she got on the shoalest part of the bar, however, it was found that the water had still shoaled, and that it was impossible to force her over, notwithstanding every exertion that could be made by heaving on the cables and anchors which had been carried out. The Lawrence had settled a little from the slackening of the lashings and giving way of one of the spars which passed from camel to camel. It became, therefore, indispensable to sink the camels again, get additional blocks between them and the cross-pieces, and replace the broken one. This expedient was resorted to towards nightfall; a few inches diminution of the Lawrence's draught was thus gained, and she was slowly and by main strength hove across the bar in the course of that night and the following day. In this laborious service efficient aid was received from the militia of the neighbourhood, under the orders of General David Meade.

Daylight of the fourth of August found the Lawrence's crew, with most of those of the other vessels, still hard at work. She got fairly afloat at eight

o'clock, and her guns were quickly mounted, and everything prepared for action. The Niagara was got over more easily on the following day; but was still on the bar when the enemy appeared in the offing, standing in with a leading breeze. Encouraged by their young commander, and excited by his appeals to their pride and patriotism, the exhausted seamen rallied to the call, and, by unparalleled exertions, the Niagara was in deep water at eleven o'clock. To gain time while engaged in the task of mounting her battery, Perry now gave orders to Lieutenant Packett, of the Ariel, and sailing-master Champlain, of the Scorpion, both their vessels being fast-sailing schooners, to weigh anchor and stand out towards the enemy, and annoy him with their heavy guns at long shot. These officers obeyed instantly, and dashed directly at the enemy, and opened a fire on him in the most gallant manner. Meantime the Lawrence remained at anchor, and the people being at quarters, commenced exercising the guns, when it became apparent that they were not yet to be called on to use them in earnest. It does not appear to have been Commodore Barclay's intention to take advantage of the critical situation of our squadron in crossing the bar to bring on an engagement, as Captain Perry had expected. If it had been, he would hardly have been turned from his purpose by this slight, though well-timed and well-executed demonstration, nor yet by the judicious and admirable disposition which Captain Perry had made to cover the inevitable weakness of his position while crossing the bar. His motive for neglecting this favourable opportunity for attack was doubtless the certainty which he felt that in a fortnight he should

have the co-operation of his heavy ship the Detroit, which would give him, in every respect, a decided superiority. Whatever may have been his motives, and they were no doubt worthy of a brave man, after a short cannonade with the two schooners, he bore up with his squadron, and stood across the lake in the direction of Long Point.

In the midst of these anxious operations, Captain Perry had received another urgent letter from General Harrison, inviting the early co-operation of his squadron. He instantly replied to it in the following words: "I have had the honour to receive your letter of the twenty-eighth of July this morning, and hasten, in reply, to inform you that I have succeeded in getting one of the sloops-of-war over the bar. The other will probably be over to-day or to-morrow. The enemy is now standing for us with five sail. We have seven over the bar; all small, however, except the Lawrence. I am of opinion that in two days the naval superiority will be decided on this lake. Should we be successful, I shall sail for the head of the lake immediately to co-operate with you, and hope that our joint efforts will be productive of honour and advantage to our country. The squadron is not much more than half manned; but, as I see no prospect of receiving reinforcements, I have determined to commence my operations. I have requested Captain Richardson to despatch an express to you the moment the issue of our contest with the enemy is known. My anxiety to join you is very great, and, had seamen been sent to me in time, I should now, in all probability, have been at the head of the lake, acting in conjunction with you." In a postscript he adds, "Thank God,

the other sloop-of-war is over. I shall be after the enemy, who is now making off, in a few hours. I shall be with you shortly."

During the remainder of the fifth of August and the whole of the following night, the crews of the different vessels were busily engaged in getting on board and distributing a few necessary stores, receiving volunteers from the militia, and preparing the vessels for sailing and for battle. At three o'clock in the morning of the sixth, the signal was made for the squadron to weigh anchor, and at four the vessels were all under sail, standing for Long Point, the direction in which the enemy had been last seen. The earnest desire of Perry to meet the enemy may be judged from his indefatigable and unceasing efforts to get his vessels over the bar, to prepare them for battle, and go in pursuit of the enemy. His ardour was warmly shared by his officers and men. From daylight on the second to the fourth of August, Perry, though in weak health, had not closed his eyes, and not an officer or man in that squadron had enjoyed a moment's rest, except such as could be snatched upon deck. During the search for the enemy the vessels were cleared for action, and there could have been little opportunity for repose. After an ineffectual pursuit of twenty-four hours, the enemy having, as it afterward proved, proceeded to Malden, at the head of the lake, the squadron returned to its anchorage off Erie, having barely been able to fetch that place. Had the wind favoured, the commodore intended to have followed the enemy to the head of the lake.

The seventh and eighth of August were employed in filling up with provisions, and receiving the military

stores for the army of General Harrison. It was the intention of Captain Perry to have put to sea on the evening of the eighth, on his way up the lake; but in the course of the day he received an express from Lieutenant Elliott, dated at Cattaraugus, sixty miles lower down the lake, informing Captain Perry that he had reached that place on his way to join the squadron and take the command of the Niagara, together with two acting lieutenants, eight midshipmen, a master-mate, a clerk, and eighty-nine men, making a reinforcement of one hundred and two souls in all.

This pleasing announcement is thus noticed in Mr. Hambleton's journal, and is interesting as giving a lively picture of the position and feelings of Perry. "We went on shore and transacted a variety of business; paid off the volunteers, so that we have none but the four months' men who signed articles. Captain Perry has just received a letter from General Harrison, informing him of the raising of the siege of Camp Meigs, and of the unsuccessful attack on the fort at Sandusky, commanded by Lieutenant Craughan. The prisoners taken there state that the new ship Detroit was launched at Malden on the seventeenth of last month. Captain Perry and I dined on shore. After dinner being alone, we had a long conversation on the state of our affairs. He confessed that he was now much at a loss what to do. While he feels the danger of delay, he is not insensible to the hazard of encountering an enemy without due preparation. His officers are few and inexperienced, and we are short of seamen. His repeated and urgent requests for men having been treated with the most mortifying neglect, he declines making another. While thus engaged,

a midshipman, Mr. J. B. Montgomery, entered and handed him a letter. It was from Lieutenant Elliott, on his way to join him with several officers and eighty-nine seamen. He was electrified by this news, and, as soon as we were alone, declared he had not been so happy since his arrival."

The commodore immediately repaired on board the Lawrence, and despatched the Ariel to run the coast down towards Cattaraugus, and bring up Lieutenant Elliott and his party. They arrived on the tenth of August, and the men proved to be of a very superior character to those which had been hitherto sent; their arrival and their superior character being both in no small degree attributable to the more urgent request of Captain Perry, and his complaints as to the character of those that were sent, which, though producing irritation in the mind of Commodore Chauncy, had also been attended with this salutary effect.

The men brought up by Lieutenant Elliott are represented, indeed, as having been "prime men," the first draught of that character which had yet been received on Lake Erie. This officer, who, soon after, received his commission as a master-commandant, derived the chief benefit from this valuable accession of seamen. The crew of the Lawrence being more nearly complete in numbers, though she had a large number of sick, than that of the Niagara, the greater part of the new draught was taken on board of the Niagara. Sailing-master Taylor, of the Lawrence, happened to be on board of that vessel when Lieutenant Elliott took command of her, and remarked that, as the men arrived alongside of her, Lieutenant Elliott called from the boats the men previously designated

for the different stations of importance on board of his vessel. He thus assumed to himself a right of selection among the men, whose relative merits were well known to him, and the residue, after being thus gleaned by him, was distributed among the other vessels. This induced Mr. Taylor, who, being a thorough seaman himself, was well calculated to appreciate the value of seamanship in others, and who was personally interested in seeing a fair share of good men on board the vessel to which he belonged, to remark to his commander, that the different vessels of the squadron were very unequally manned, in consequence of so great a proportion of the effective men being engrossed by the Niagara. With the same magnanimity which he had used on a former occasion towards Captain Morris—a magnanimity most unusual in the service, and which strongly contrasted with the course which Commodore Chauncey had pursued towards him—Captain Perry took no notice of the courtesy shown to him, as the commanding officer in this unauthorized selection, and no steps to equalize the effective force of the vessel under his command, which was to bear the brunt and burden of the day in his country's battle, with that of his junior officer.

This acceptable re-enforcement of effective men, due, in no inconsiderable degree, to the urgent remonstrances of Captain Perry, was accompanied by a letter, which betrayed great irritation on the part of the commodore, and was well suited to irritate and wound the person to whom it was addressed. It was dated on board the Pike, off Burlington Bay, on the thirteenth of July; and, instead of being directed, as was the custom of the commodore, "to Captain Perry,

senior naval officer at Lake Erie," it was simply, "commanding the U. S. brig Lawrence." It ran as follows:

"SIR,

"I have been duly honoured with your letters of the twenty-third and twenty-sixth ultimo, and notice your anxiety for men and officers. I am equally anxious to furnish you, and no time shall be lost in sending officers and men to you, as soon as the public service will allow me to send them from this lake. I regret that you are not pleased with the men sent you by Messrs. Champlin and Forrest; for, to my knowledge, a part of them are not surpassed by any seamen we have in the fleet; and I have yet to learn that the colour of the skin, or the cut and trimmings of the coat, can affect a man's qualifications or usefulness. I have nearly fifty blacks on board of this ship, and many of them are among my best men; and those people you call soldiers have been to sea from two to seventeen years, and I presume that you will find them as good and useful as any men on board of your vessel, at least if I can judge by comparison, for those which we have on board of this ship are attentive and obedient, and, as far as I can judge, many of them excellent seamen; at any rate, the men sent to Lake Erie have been selected with a view of sending a fair proportion of petty officers and seamen, and I presume, upon examination, it will be found that they are equal to those upon this lake.

"I have received several letters from the secretary of the navy, urging the necessity of the naval force upon Lake Erie acting immediately. You will there-

fore, as soon as you receive a sufficient number of men, commence your operations against the enemy, and, as soon as possible, co-operate with the army under General Harrison. As you have assured the secretary that you should conceive yourself equal or superior to the enemy with a force in men so much less than I had deemed necessary, there will be a great deal expected from you by your country, and I trust they will not be disappointed in the high expectations formed of your gallantry and judgment. I will barely make an observation, which was impressed upon my mind by an old soldier, that is, 'Never despise your enemy.' I was mortified to see, by your letters to the secretary, extracts and copies of which have been forwarded to me, that you complain that the distance was so great between Sackett's Harbour and Erie that you could not get instructions from me in time to execute with any advantage to the service, thereby intimating the necessity of a *separate command*. Would it not have been as well to have made the complaint to me instead of the secretary?

"My confidence in your zeal and abilities is undiminished, and I sincerely hope that your success may equal your utmost wishes. I shall despatch to you some officers and seamen and farther instructions on my return to Niagara, where I hope to be the day after to-morrow."

It will be seen that the commodore does not distinctly assert that the men sent to Lake Erie were equal to those whom he had retained. He only presumes that, upon examination, they will be found to be equal. A part of them, he says, to his knowledge,

were not surpassed by any seamen in his fleet. The commodore could not have hazarded an unqualified assertion. All the officers on Lake Erie unite in pronouncing the men sent to that lake by Commodore Chauncey as having been the most wretched selection that could have been made; while it is equally notorious in the service, notwithstanding what Mr. Cooper says in exculpation of Commodore Chauncey, as to the generally inferior character of the seamen on all the lakes, that there were on Lake Ontario a large proportion of as good seamen as ever trod a ship's deck; the genuine long queues abounded there. Commodore Chauncey, a thorough seaman himself, had a passion for the collection about him of all the most finished specimens of the true man-of-war's-men that could be found; and, unfortunately, the gratification of this taste was brought into collision with the obligations of duty, as well as the sense of magnanimity which rendered it incumbent upon him to send to a junior officer a full and fair share of seamen for the execution of an important trust, and to send them in season. The consciousness that he had not done this, led him to receive with greater irritation Captain Perry's letter of complaint, and prompted the irony and sarcasm of his reply.

The following extract from Mr. Hambleton's journal is amply confirmatory of what we have said with regard to the detention on Lake Ontario. Several officers who served on Lake Ontario confirm the account of the extraordinary number of men, exactly double what were necessary, whom the commodore had continued to crowd together on board the *Pike*. "Several weeks ago, the secretary of the navy informed

Captain Perry that a sufficient number for both lakes had been forwarded. This is true; but, unfortunately, they were all sent to Lake Ontario, where our portion was detained without necessity. For instance, the *Pike*, with a single deck and twenty-six guns, had four hundred men, most of them prime seamen, mustering in all four hundred and seventy; and even now he has not sent a single officer of rank or experience except Captain Elliott."

With the feeling of an old officer addressing his inferior in rank and age, the commodore may have thought that the commendatory phrase which closed his letter would have qualified the bitterness of his rebuke; but the patience and amiability of Perry was coupled with extreme sensitiveness to whatever affected his honour. On the very day that he received the commodore's letter, he enclosed a copy of it to the secretary of the navy, earnestly requesting that he might be removed from his present station. Mr. Cooper has incorrectly placed Captain Perry's application for removal from his command on the ground of his "complaining of the quality of the crews of the vessels which he commanded." If this statement were to remain uncorrected, it would leave an impression upon the public mind suited to diminish the well-earned fame of Perry; an impression, indeed, which it is the general tendency of all that Mr. Cooper has written with regard to him to produce. But for this circumstance, the difficulty which took place between Commodore Chauncey and Captain Perry would not have been here adverted to, as it did not prevent them from subsequently resuming their friendship. Captain Perry's letter will show the real grounds of his

request to be removed from under Commodore Chauncey's command, and the unfounded character of Mr. Cooper's allegation. It is dated on board the Lawrence, at Erie, on the tenth of August.

"SIR,

"I am under the disagreeable necessity of requesting a removal from this station. The enclosed copy of a letter from Commodore Chauncey will, I am satisfied, convince you that I cannot serve longer under an officer who has been so totally regardless of my feelings. The men spoken of by Commodore Chauncey are those mentioned in the roll I did myself the honour to send you. They may, sir, be as good as are on the other lake; but, if so, that squadron must be poorly manned indeed. In the requisition for men sent by your order, I made a note, saying I should consider myself equal or superior to the enemy with a smaller number of men. What then might have been considered certain, may, from lapse of time, be deemed problematical.

"The commodore insinuates that I have taken measures to obtain a separate command. I beg leave to ask you, sir, if anything in any of my letters to you could be construed into such a meaning. On my return to this place in June last, I wrote you that the Queen Charlotte and Lady Prevost were off this harbour, and if they remained a few days I might possibly be able to intercept their return to Malden. I had no orders to act; and the only way of obtaining them in time was to write to you, sir, as the communication between Commodore Chauncey and myself occupied considerably upward of a month. In my request, I

meant this as a reason for applying to you on the emergency instead of to the commodore.

"I have been on this station upward of five months, and during that time have submitted cheerfully and with pleasure to fatigue and anxiety hitherto unknown to me in the service. I have had a very responsible situation, without an officer, except one sailing-master, of the least experience. However seriously I have felt my situation, not a murmur has escaped me. The critical state of General Harrison was such that I took upon myself the very great responsibility of going out with the few young officers you had been pleased to send me, with the few seamen I had, and as many volunteers as I could muster from the militia. I did not shrink from this responsibility; but, sir, at that very moment I surely did not anticipate the receipt of a letter in every line of which is insult. Under all these circumstances, I beg most respectfully and most earnestly that I may be immediately removed from this station. I am willing to forego that reward which I have considered for two months past almost within my grasp. If, sir, I have rendered my country any service in the equipment of this squadron, I beg it may be considered an inducement to grant my request. I shall proceed with the squadron and whatever is in my power shall be done to promote the interest and honor of the service."

The reader may thus see for himself that Captain Perry's application for removal from his command was made upon the specific ground that he was unwilling to serve under an officer who had been totally

regardless of his feelings, by addressing to him a letter which he conceived to be insulting in every line, and not in any measure or degree on account of "the quality of the crews of the vessels he commanded," as is incorrectly alleged by Mr. Cooper. In going out with only three hundred officers and men, and a few militia volunteers hastily collected, on his own responsibility and without orders to act, he manifested his willingness to meet the enemy, whatever might be "the quality of the crews of the vessels he commanded," as he subsequently did his ability to triumph signally with the same materials.

Lieutenant Elliott was at the same time the bearer of a second letter from Commodore Chauncey, dated off Niagara on the third of August, in which he expressed the hope that the one hundred officers and men accompanying Lieutenant Elliott, together with such assistance as Captain Perry might be able to get from the army, would place him so nearly upon a footing with the enemy as to enable him to go out and offer battle, and open, if possible, an immediate intercourse with General Harrison. Commodore Chauncey also expressed his disappointment at not being able to send Captain Perry any marines, as he had expected to have done. He stated that, as Captain Wainwright, who had been announced as about to arrive with a detachment, had not reached Sackett's Harbour before the commodore sailed, he was unable to send them at that time without distressing his own ship; but, as soon as he should return to Sackett's Harbour, he promised to send fifty marines to Captain Perry. Ten days after making this promise, the commodore, while on his way to Sackett's Har-

bour, met with the schooner Lady of the Lake, which, by his order, was transporting the promised detachment of marines to Niagara, to be thence forwarded to Lake Erie. Commodore Chauncey now took these marines, which he had promised to Captain Perry, and which would have been so valuable to him, on board of his own vessels. The reason assigned by Mr. Cooper for this unjust appropriation was, that Commodore Chauncey had recently lost one hundred and fifty men by the foundering of two of his vessels, and the capture of two others by the enemy in action, on the night of the tenth of August. Yet, three or four days after Commodore Chauncey deemed it necessary to strengthen himself with this feeble re-enforcement to his large force, but which would have been of so much importance to the smaller force of Captain Perry, we find the commodore, in the absence of two of his cruisers, the Fair American and Asp, offering battle to the whole British squadron off the False Ducks. If the commodore considered himself a match for the British squadron without two of his cruisers, with still more confidence might he have gone into action with those two vessels, and without the fifty marines withheld from Lake Erie, where their presence was so essential. As for the substitution of either militiamen or newly-levied regular troops for marines, it is needless to say how ill the former could supply the place of the latter. Marines, from the long-continued habit of serving on shipboard, are as much at home there as seamen, and are of essential use in the discharge of every ordinary duty. In battle, whether stationed at the great guns, to the exercise of which they are trained in all well-disci-

plined ships, as, indeed, they should be while in barracks, or using their own appropriate arms, they have ever shown the most devoted courage. These circumstances add to the injustice which Commodore Chauncey did to Captain Perry in withholding from him his due quota of marines, under a pretext which is wholly insufficient. It would be unfair to Commodore Chauncey not to state that the injustice done by him to Captain Perry, in withholding a sufficient number of good men, has been practised not unfrequently by our old commanders, though, perhaps, in less critical circumstances. Deprived of the distinction of higher grades as a just reward of faithful services, and accustomed yearly to see their juniors take rank beside them, they cling with pertinacity to every admitted attribute of their superior station, and use their authority in a narrow spirit, and with reference chiefly to themselves. The subjects of injustice themselves, they are not a little prone to exercise injustice towards others. The creation of a higher grade, while it would incalculably promote the discipline and best interests of the service, would impart a magnanimity to our old commanders in their relations with their inferiors, which they are at present but little in the habit of practising.

It may be as well here to state, that the difficulty growing out of Commodore Chauncey's harsh letter of the thirtieth of July was closed, so far as these two officers were concerned, by the following reply of Commodore Chauncey to Captain Perry's letter, announcing his having requested to be withdrawn from Lake Erie. It is inserted in justice to Commodore Chauncey, as being alike creditable to his good

sense and good feeling. The letter is dated at Sackett's Harbour on the twenty-seventh of August.

"SIR,

"I have received your letter of the eleventh instant, wherein you inform me that you had enclosed a copy of my letter of the thirtieth of July to the honourable the secretary of the navy, with a request that you might be immediately removed from Lake Erie. I regret your determination for various reasons; the first and most important is, that the public service would suffer from a change, and your removal might in some degree defeat the objects of the campaign. Although I conceive that you have treated me with less candour than I was entitled to, considering the warm interest that I have always taken in your behalf, yet my confidence in your zeal and ability has been undiminished, and I should really regret that any circumstance should remove you from your present command before you have accomplished the objects for which you were sent to Erie; and I trust that you will give the subject all the consideration that its importance requires before you make up your mind definitely. You ought also to consider that the first duty of an officer is to sacrifice all personal feelings to his public duties."

The volunteers from the militia which Captain Perry had taken on board to go in pursuit of the enemy had only been for that single cruise. He was unable to procure any permanent volunteers to perform the duty of marines during the cruising season. With his small force, a few short of four hundred officers

and men, he sailed on the twelfth of August from Erie, to proceed up the lake and place himself in co-operation with the northwestern army, the headquarters of which were then at Seneca, on the banks of the Sandusky. The order of sailing established by Perry for his squadron was in a double column; the Lawrence, Purcupine, Caledonia, Ohio, and Ariel being on the right, and the Niagara, Trippe, Tigress, Somers, and Scorpion on the left, in the order respectively in which they are named. It will be seen that he had now added the Ohio and Trippe to his squadron, under the command respectively of Sailing-master D. Dobbin and Lieutenant J. E. Smith. There was also an established line of battle in one line, with the Ariel and Scorpion, the two fastest of the small vessels, stationed on the opposite side from the enemy, and near the commodore, in a situation to support any part of the line that might require it. In a subsequent order, the Scorpion was brought into the line, and the distance between the vessels was fixed at a half cable's length. Finally, there was an order of attack, in which a particular antagonist in the British squadron was assigned to each vessel of ours, which was intended to facilitate the business of remodelling the line of battle, if necessary, according to the arrangement of the enemy's squadron when it should be fallen in with, and to fix in the mind of each commander his special adversary. In this order of attack Perry had reserved to himself the privilege of fighting the largest of the enemy's ships, and had accordingly placed the Lawrence opposite the Detroit in the diagram, and the Niagara, in like manner, opposite the second British ship, the

Queen Charlotte. Provision was made, in case of a separation of our vessels and an accidental rencontre in the night, to prevent a collision under the impression of their being enemies, that our vessels should hoist one light and hail, the vessel to windward should answer first "Jones," to which the leewardmost would answer "Madison." The additional order was subsequently issued, that, in the event of the enemy's approaching our squadron to attack it while at anchor, the signal of two consecutive musket-shots from the Lawrence would be a signal for the vessels to cut their cables and make sail, beginning with the leewardmost, and form astern of the Lawrence, which would show a light; three consecutive musket-shots would be the signal to weigh in the same succession. The orders were all well conceived to promote concerted action and prevent surprise, and indicated judgment and forethought.

On the sixteenth the squadron arrived off Cunningham's Island, near the head of the lake, without having seen the enemy. It was blowing fresh at the time, which prevented it from taking a berth close in with Sandusky Bar, as Perry had intended, in order to disembark the military stores for the army, and communicate with General Harrison. On the following day, one of the enemy's small cruisers having hove in sight, probably to reconnoitre, the squadron gave chase and was nearly up with her, when, night coming on, she disappeared among the group of the Sisters.

The squadron now anchored off Sandusky, and General Harrison came on board the Lawrence on the nineteenth of August, in the evening, accompanied by Generals Cass and M'Arthur, Colonel Gaines, Major

Croghan, with the whole of his numerous staff, and twenty-six chiefs of the Shawnee, Wyandot, and Delaware Indians; among whom were three highly influential ones, Crane, Black Hoof, and Captain Tommy by name. The object of the general in bringing the Indians was, that they might inform their friends then with the enemy of our force, with the hope of detaching them. They were, of course, filled with wonder at the spectacle of our "big canoes." On the morning of the twentieth, a salute was fired in honor of the general's visit. Perry learned from him that he was not ready to advance, and determined, in the interim, to go in pursuit of the enemy's squadron and offer it battle. The general and commodore spent the day in reconnoitring Put-in Bay, to the advantages of which the general had first called his attention. After concerting their plans for the removal of the army to this point, when it should be all assembled previously to invading Canada, the general returned on the twenty-first to his camp. Perry proceeded on the twenty-third to Put-in Bay, and on the twenty-fifth stood for Malden, and discovered the British squadron at anchor within Bar Point. It had not yet been reinforced by the new ship Detroit, which they could not discern. The wind blew fresh at the time; and, as the Bay of Malden can only be approached and left again with a leading breeze, when the wind is from southwest or northeast, Captain Perry thought it unsafe to run the risk of getting embayed, in which event he would be much exposed to lose some of his dullest sailors. On this account, and in consequence of being attacked with bilious remittent fever, a disease which was very prevalent in the squadron, and which was

attended with almost immediate prostration of strength, he took his squadron into Put-in Bay. This is a snug harbour, formed by the group of Bass Islands. It opens towards the Canada shore in the direction of Malden, overlooks the passage into the upper and lower lakes, and offers an admirable point for protecting the adjacent coasts of Ohio, and the outlets of the numberless streams which here disembogue into Lake Erie. Soon after Perry's attack, his disease, owing doubtless to the strength of his constitution, assumed a very malignant character. The surgeon of the Lawrence was seriously ill, as were the chaplain, Mr. T. Breese, and Alexander Perry, the commodore's brother. The assistant surgeon, Dr. U. Parsons, himself out of health, was obliged to prescribe for the commodore, and all the sick of the Lawrence and of the small vessels. He resorted at once, in the commodore's case, to strong remedial measures, and applied a blister to the back of his neck. On the twenty-eighth of August Dr. Parsons himself became affected with the prevailing fever. Though so ill as to be incapable of walking, with a humane self-devotion most honourable to him, he continued to attend at the bedside of the sick, to which he was carried, and to prescribe for them, not only on board of the Lawrence, but on board the small vessels, being lifted for the purpose on board of them in his cot, and the sick brought on deck for his prescription.

On the thirty-first of August, while lying in Put-in Bay, Perry received from General Harrison a reinforcement of near one hundred men, which, after deducting a few deaths, and others left on shore as useless at Erie, carried the total of his muster-roll to

four hundred and ninety souls. Some of the men who had been selected from General M'Arthur's brigade were lake or river boatmen, and were received as seamen. The majority, however, were intended to perform duty as marines in the squadron, in consequence of the disappointment in receiving the expected guard from Ontario. The men detailed for this service were chiefly taken from the Kentucky militia and from the twenty-eighth regiment of infantry, which had recently joined the army from Kentucky, where it had been entirely raised. The whole party, officers and men included, were volunteers, led by a spirit of adventure to embark in an enterprise so different from the previous habits of their life. Few of them had ever seen a vessel before they were marched to the mouth of the Sandusky, and their astonishment and curiosity when they got on board were irrepressible. They climbed to the masthead; dove to the bottom of the hold; passed, without stopping or understanding any distinction, from the sick bay to the captain's cabin, expressing their admiration as they went in awkward but rapturous terms. These Kentuckians were dressed in their favourite fringed linsey-woolsey hunting-shirts and drawers, and were themselves equally an object of curiosity to the officers and seamen, few of whom had ever seen any of these hardy borderers. Perry, for a time, was amused with the rest; but began, ere long, to fear that his extraordinary marines would lend but little assistance in their appropriate office of sustaining the discipline and etiquette of the squadron. Soon after their arrival, he briefly stated to the non-commissioned officer in command of that portion of the detachment which had been detailed for his

own vessel, the nature of the duties that would be required of them, and the line of conduct they would be required to preserve. The officer then mustered his men on deck, and informed them that they had been kindly indulged by Commodore Perry with an opportunity of gratifying their curiosity by seeing the ship, in doing which they had been permitted to violate the rules and discipline of the sea-service without rebuke. They must now come to order, and submit themselves to the usual discipline of marines, confine themselves to their proper places, and attend to their appropriate duties, which were forthwith explained to them. The stout Kentuckians took the admonition in good part; they carefully conformed to all that was required of them, were of essential use in manning the squadron, and replacing the marines and seamen which Commodore Chauncey had withheld; and their association with Perry was, to such of them as survived to tell the tale of their adventures, a special and enduring source of gratification.

His complement thus completed as to numbers, this valuable interval of repose was profitably employed, by Perry's orders in teaching his ill-assorted crews their duty, and training them in the various evolutions preparatory to battle.

After a week's confinement to his berth, Perry became convalescent, and found himself sufficiently well on the first of September to be upon deck. On that day he got his squadron once more in motion and stood off Malden. As the weather was settled and the wind favourable for standing in and out of the bay, Captain Perry ran very close in, and continued off the harbour the whole day with his colours set.

He found their new ship, the Detroit, rigged and anchored with the rest of their squadron at the mouth of the harbour, under cover of a battery on the mainland, flanked by a second on an island opposite. His anticipations of the enemy's obtaining a superior force by the equipment of this ship, which he had studied to prevent by appearing on the lake and striking a blow while his force was yet superior to that of the enemy, being thus defeated by the delay of Commodore Chauncy in sending the crews for his vessels, it only remained for him to try the issue of a battle, of which the chances were now rendered so much against him. This purpose he was still no less firmly bent on effecting. It appears, moreover, that he already meditated an attack on the enemy under the guns of his batteries, should he be unsuccessful in drawing him out, in concert with an attack from General Harrison by land.

As the enemy showed no disposition at this time to accept the offer of battle thus made to him, on equal terms, in the open lake, Perry, after carefully reconnoitring his position, bore up for Sandusky on the second of September, in order to communicate with General Harrison with regard to embarking his army for an attack on Malden. Captain Perry was of opinion that he could embark twenty-five hundred or three thousand men; but they would so encumber his decks as to destroy the use of the great guns. He called the general's attention to a small island, known as the Middle Sister, distant about fifteen miles from Malden, which he thought would offer an excellent rendezvous the day previous to an attack. This suggestion was subsequently adopted.

A most deeply mortifying circumstance attended Captain Perry's return to Sandusky. He found there two separate letters from the secretary of the navy, dated on the eighteenth of August. One of them was in reply to his application for removal from the command of Lake Erie. It was an exceedingly temperate and judicious letter, in which, while he was informed that the interests of the public service did not admit of a change of commanders under existing circumstances, his patriotism and sense of duty were powerfully appealed to as motives for inducing him to allay his feelings of discontent, to avoid recrimination, and persevere in the zealous and honourable path of duty which he had hitherto pursued with so much credit to himself and advantage to his country. The secretary concluded his letter with the following admirable sentiment, so well suited to influence a generous temper:

"It is the duty of an officer, and in none does his character shine more conspicuous, to sacrifice all personal motives and feelings when in collision with the public good. This sacrifice you are called upon to make; and I calculate with confidence upon your efforts to restore and preserve harmony, and to concentrate the vigorous exertions of all in carrying into effect the great objects of your enterprise."

The soothing and complimentary effects of this letter were, however, accompanied by a very bitter antidote in another letter from the same functionary of the same date, which, without once adverting to the subject of the difficulty with Commodore Chauncey,

or the tendered resignation of the Lake Erie command, was filled throughout with reproof and animadversion, expressed occasionally in a tone sufficiently bitter and taunting. It commenced thus abruptly:

"A draught has been drawn upon me for four thousand two hundred and seventy-eight dollars for lead ballast. This appears to me extraordinary; for, admitting there was no pig-iron, yet as you are on a fresh-water lake, and require no room for water, and but little for provisions and stores for a short cruise, stone, properly stowed and leveled, would have answered every purpose. I presume, i. neither pig-iron nor lead could have been procured, that the object would not have been frustrated on that account. I make great allowances for the remote situation and want of local resources, but the expenditures have been great indeed.

"I observe Mr. Magrath, a purser, in command of one of the vessels. You have several officers, highly spoken of by their late commanders, who are now commissioned lieutenants. Two of them, Messrs. Yarnall and Packett, have brought valuable prizes across the Atlantic. You have complained very much, and it appears to me rather unreasonably, of the want of officers. Those you have have seen considerable service, from which they are regularly entitled to the situations they now hold, and Mr. Magrath cannot command to the prejudice of the lieutenants. You surely do not expect the frigates to be stripped of the senior lieutenants in order to furnish you with what you are pleased to consider experienced officers.

"I regret to observe, by a letter from General Har-

rison, received yesterday at the department of war, that he appears to be under the impression that you are destitute of qualified officers, and that your crews are composed of anything but seamen. If he has received the impression from you, I deem it extremely improper; and I am mortified that the idea has considerable currency. If the fact was really so, its existence was not to be made a matter of public notoriety, to imbolden the enemy and depress the confidence of the officers and men in their own powers. If you were yourself convinced of the fact, it was a proper ground of remonstrance to this department, and would ever have been a justification on your part in declining to meet the enemy until a remedy should have been applied."

There seems to be something disingenuous in the mode adopted by the secretary to get rid of the main difficulty with regard to Captain Perry's objections to Commodore Chauncey's letter, by counselling conciliation and appealing to his patriotism, and yet, on the same day, returning upon him with sevenfold acrimony in connexion with the same difficulties; holding him, moreover, responsible for the very deficiency of officers and men of which he had such just reason to complain, and for the tendency of this notorious deficiency to depress his own men and imbolden the enemy. Instructed to co-operate with General Harrison, and constantly urged by him to join company, how could he avoid stating to him the causes of his inability to comply? His sneer at the extravagance of Captain Perry's pretensions, and at the absurdity of stripping the frigates of their senior lieutenants in

order to furnish him with what he was pleased to consider experienced officers, was no less futile and ridiculous than it was insulting. On the day that Captain Perry received this harsh rebuke, he wrote a temperate and respectful reply, amply vindicating himself from the charges thus brought against him. It was in the following words:

“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the eighteenth ultimo, and am sorry to observe that my conduct in several particulars is disapproved by the department. No doubt I have fallen into many errors, but I beg leave to assure you that I have used my best exertions to forward the views of the department in the equipment of the vessels on this lake with the least possible expense and delay. If I have failed, I hope the failure will be attributed to anything but a want of zeal for the service and a proper attention to the important interests committed to my care. On ascertaining that pig-iron could not be had, and being informed that lead would at any time command cost at Erie, I did not hesitate to order it, the runs in the vessels being so low as not to admit a sufficient quantity of stone ballast. The expenditures on this station have no doubt amounted to a large sum; but I am well convinced, when critically examined, it will be found to have been necessary. I have not authorized the purchase of a single article but what I deemed absolutely necessary, and I have paid the strictest attention to economy in every particular.

“I was aware, at the time I appointed Mr. Magrath, that it was irregular, but I was fully convinced that it was the best arrangement that I could make.

I knew him to be an experienced sea-officer, and that his appointment did not interfere with the wishes of the other officers. Mr. Packett, then acting lieutenant, by his own application had command of the Ariel, and Mr. Yarnall, made acting lieutenant by myself, was the second officer of this vessel. Neither of them would have preferred the command of the Caledonia to the situation he held.

"I am sorry that my application for experienced officers should have been considered unreasonable. Mr. Yarnall and Mr. Packett are certainly fine young men, and will make valuable officers. But two sloops of war and nine other vessels required a much greater number of officers than I had, and, as I conceived, of more experience. If I have been too urgent in this particular, I hope the ardent desire I had to have under my command a force adequate to the object in view, will serve as my apology.

"Heretofore I have considered myself fortunate in having but little said in the public prints respecting my force. So far from giving currency to the opinion that is said to prevail, I have endeavoured, as much as possible, to conceal my weakness. But in a village like Erie it must at all times be impossible to conceal the numbers or nature of such a force, but particularly when there were several thousand militia in the place, all eager to know the exact state of affairs, and as eager to communicate to their correspondents the result of their inquiries. The commanders of the vessels were personally known to the inhabitants; and it was easy for any printer to procure a list for publication, without applying to me or any officer under my command. The list published was without my knowledge.

Nor will it be thought strange that General Harrison should have had a tolerably correct idea of the nature of the force at Erie, when it is known that one of his officers was stationed there for several weeks before the squadron sailed. I have the honour to enclose you extracts of my letters to him on the subject, which I hope will not be thought improper when our relative situation is considered. I have this day placed Lieutenant Turner in command of the Caledonia."

With regard to the imputed extravagance of the expenditures, it may be farther remarked, that the expenses of the construction of the Erie squadron fell far below those of vessels of equal size on Lake Ontario; and, furthermore, that Perry had, of his own free-will, relinquished the financial agency for the lake, which would have proved a source of considerable profit to him, from the belief that it would interfere with his more important obligations. It is truly painful thus to see Perry reduced to the necessity of defending himself. The fulness of the defence shows, however, the absurd and simulated character of the charges. Henceforth other cares than those of self-vindication remain for him, and the ingenuity of the censorious secretary is tasked to devise commendatory phrases instead of detecting imaginary faults.



CHAPER VIII.

Intelligence of the Enemy's Intention to Sail.—Relative Force of Squadrons.—Perry returns to Put-in Bay.—Last Instructions for Battle.—Enemy appears in Sight, standing for our Squadrons.—Perry sails.—Shift of Wind.—Enemy to Leeward.—Clearing, for Action.—Hoisting Battle-flag.—Cheers along the Line.—Action commences.—Destructive Fire on the Lawrence in bearing down.—Supported by Scorpion, Ariel, and Caledonia.—Niagara draws to Windward.—Desperate Resistance of the Lawrence.—She is reduced to a Wreck.—Perry shifts to the Niagara.—Perils of his Passage.—Sympathy of the Lawrence's Crew.—He reaches the Niagara in Safety.—Surrender of the Lawrence.—Death of Brooks.—The Niagara breaks the Enemy's Line.—Engages both Sides.—British Squadron attempts to Wear.—Detroit and Queen Charlotte get foul.—Terrible raking Fire.—British Surrender.—Appearance of both Squadrons.—Character of the Victory.—Official Letters.—Burial of Seamen.—Return to Put-in Bay.—Burial of Officers.

On the fourth of September Captain Perry despatched the Ohio to Erie for provisions and stores, with directions to hasten back, as her services would probably be required in a week. On the fifth, our squadron still continuing in Sandusky Bay, three citizens arrived from Malden, who communicated to Captain Perry that the British army under General Proctor being short of provisions, it had been determined that the squadron should sail to engage ours, and endeavour to open a communication with Long Point, so as to draw the necessary supplies from the depot at that place. Captain Perry now also received more accurate information than he had yet obtained as to the force of the enemy's squadron. From the information he then obtained, with what was afterward

learned of the squadron, we will now state that it consisted of the new and very strongly-built ship Detroit, of five hundred tons and nineteen guns, all long except two twenty-four pound caronades; of the ship Queen Charlotte, of four hundred tons and seventeen guns, three of them being long guns, the Detroit and Queen Charlotte having each one of the long guns on a pivot; of the schooner Lady Prevost, of two hundred and thirty tons and thirteen guns, three being long guns; of the brig Hunter, of one hundred and eighty tons and ten guns; of the sloop Little Belt, of one hundred tons and three guns, two long twelves and one long eighteen; and of the schooner Chippeway, of one hundred tons, mounting one long eighteen; making in all sixty-three guns, thirty-five of which were long. The squadron was commanded by Captain Robert Heriot Barclay, a veteran officer, who had served with distinction in many of those naval engagements which had rendered the name and flag of England so terrible on the ocean, and who had been with Nelson at Trafalgar, and been desperately wounded in that ever-memorable seafight; more recently, as first lieutenant of a frigate, he had lost an arm in action with the French. He was a skilful seaman, and an officer of approved courage. He was seconded by a brave and experienced officer in Captain Finnis, with others of honourable standing in their profession. He had, within a day or two, received a draught of fifty men from the Dover troop-ship, then lying at Quebec, and his crews now consisted of one hundred and fifty men from the royal navy, as admitted in the finding of the court-martial on Commodore Barclay, with, according to James's statement, eighty Canadian

sailors, and two hundred and forty soldiers from the forty-first regiment of the line and the regiment of Newfoundland Rangers, chiefly from the former; making together, by their own account, an aggregate of four hundred and seventy seamen and soldiers, to whom are to be added thirty-two officers known to have been in the squadron, making in all five hundred and two souls.

Of our vessels, mounting in all fifty-four guns, only the Lawrence and Niagara, each of five hundred tons, could be considered men-of-war. The others were exceedingly frail, and without bulwarks. They were chiefly armed with long guns. The brigs mounted each twenty guns, eighteen thirty-two pound carronades and two long twelves. They constituted the main dependence of the squadron, and could only be effective against an enemy chiefly armed with long guns by coming at once to close action. The second in command of the American squadron was Captain J. D. Elliott, who had recently superseded Lieutenant D. Turner in the command of the Niagara, on the eve of sailing from Erie. The other officers were very young men, of little experience though of great promise, and sailing-masters taken from the merchant service, chiefly selected by Captain Perry from among his fellow-townsmen, and all of whom did great credit to his selection, and proved most worthy of his confidence. The whole force in officers and men of our squadron amounted to four hundred and ninety; of these, one hundred and sixteen were on the sick-lists of the different vessels on the morning of the action, seventy-eight cases being of bilious fever. There were a greater number of so-called seamen among them than

in the British squadron, but they were such as remained from the draughts sent to Lake Ontario after the best materials had been selected. They were of all colours and climes, reduced in numbers and emaciated by disease. The Kentucky volunteers were stout fellows, it is true, with gallant spirits, but utter strangers to ships, and unaccustomed to discipline. Those who have been accustomed to look upon the picked soldiers of a British regiment will readily believe that the soldiers embarked in the British squadron were not less stout than the Kentuckians. They had been trained to subordination by years of service, while their voyages to every clime whither the ambition of England carries her triumphant arms had made them familiar with the ocean, and at home on shipboard. The physical force, like the force in ships and number of guns was greatly in favour of the English. A consideration of the intelligence thus obtained as to the enemy's superiority did not check Captain Perry's oft-repeated desire to meet him. It was not in his nature to neglect the advice of Commodore Chauncey, however tauntingly given, however well suited to increase his responsibility in the event of failure, "Never despise your enemy!" But if he did not despise his enemy, he had yet a just sense of his own resources, a proper confidence in himself. He shared, in a degree in no respect inferior, the feeling which made all things possible to Nelson, which impelled Paul Jones to enterprises of such seeming hardihood.

On the receipt of this intelligence of Barclay's preparations to encounter him, Perry set sail from Sandusky on the sixth of September, and, after reconnoitring the enemy off Malden, and observing that he was

still at his moorings, returned to Put-in Bay, which offered so many facilities for watching his movements. Here the last preparations were made for battle, the last instructions given to regulate the conduct of the subordinate commanders. The commanders of the various vessels, being summoned by signal on board the Lawrence, were each furnished with Perry's corrected instructions for their government; and he farther explained to them verbally his views with regard to whatever contingency might occur. He now produced a battle-flag, which he had caused to be privately prepared by Mr. Hambleton before leaving Erie, and the hoisting of which to the main royal mast of the Lawrence was to be his signal for action: a blue flag, bearing, in large white letters, "Don't give up the ship!" the dying words of the hero whose name she bore. When about to withdraw, he stated to them his intention to bring the enemy from the first to close quarters, in order not to lose by the short range of his carronades; and the last emphatic injunction with which he dismissed them was, that he could not, in case of difficulty, advise them better than in the words of Lord Nelson, "If you lay your enemy close alongside, you cannot be out of your place!"

Every preparation had thus been made to meet the enemy, and the young commander had done all that depended upon him to secure a triumph for his country. The crew were all well stationed, had become thoroughly practised at the guns, and felt something of the confidence which familiarity with the weapons they were to use inspires. The sickness, however, had extended itself throughout the fleet, and operated as a great discouragement. On the eighth, all the

medical officers were ill but Dr. Parsons, who, though but half recovered, had returned to duty. He was obliged to be carried twice through the rain, which continued the whole day, to see the surgeon and the other sick of the Niagara. By Dr. Parsons' advice, the water used by the crews was boiled; it being thought that the prevailing dysentery, and perhaps the fever, were caused by the use of the lake water.

The British commander, who had shown a chivalrous spirit throughout, did not long keep his antagonist in suspense. At sunrise on the morning of the tenth of September, the British squadron was discovered from the masthead of the Lawrence, on the north-western board, standing towards Put-in Bay, in which our squadron was lying. Barclay's object was evidently attack, not an uninterrupted passage to Long Point, which he could certainly have had; and if battle was only an alternative with him, to be risked in extremity when it could no longer be avoided, he could have risked it on his return with supplies for the army, if it could no longer be avoided. Barclay, choosing his time, might have sailed out along the Canada shore to the northward of all the islands in the night, and got well to the eastward down the lake before Perry's look-out vessels which he kept off the Sister Islands, could have advised him of the enemy being out. But he bore gallantly down to engage, choosing his time so as to have a long day before him, coming more than half way towards his enemy, and offering him battle on his own coast. This fact is interesting, setting completely at rest the pretension to any inferiority of force on the part of the British, never set up by Barclay or his officers at the time, and only since

produced by disingenuous, and unfaithful historians, endeavouring systematically to account, by an alleged superiority of force, for a victory that, at any rate in this instance, was effected by superior gunnery, and the extraordinary mental resources of the victorious commander.

The fact of the British squadron being in sight of the masthead was at once reported to Perry by Lieutenant Dulany Forrest, the officer of the deck on board the Lawrence. He ordered the signal made "under way to get!" In a few minutes the whole squadron was under sail, beating out of the harbour against a light breeze from southwest, and with the boats ahead to tow.

Snake Island and some other islands of the Bass group interposed between our squadron and the enemy. By beating round to windward of these islands, our squadron would have had a leading breeze to run down upon the enemy, and, consequently, the weather-gauge in the approaching battle! With this view the squadron had commenced beating out. The wind, however, was very unsteady, and, as not unfrequently happens on such occasions, it headed the squadron off almost every time it crossed the channel and was obliged to tack. Several hours had passed in this way. It was near ten o'clock, when Captain Perry, now become impatient, addressed his sailing-master, Mr. Taylor, who was working the Lawrence, and asked his opinion as to the probable time that would still be required to weather the islands. When Mr. Taylor's reply confirmed the opinion he had himself formed of the probable delay that this evolution would occasion, Perry told the master he would wear ship, and run to leeward

of the islands. Mr. Taylor remarked that they would then have to engage the enemy from to leeward. Captain Perry replied, "I don't care, to windward or to leeward, they shall fight to-day!" The signal was accordingly made to wear ship; but, before the evolution was performed, the wind shifted suddenly to southeast, and enabled the squadron to clear the island and keep the weather-gauge. The anecdote is illustrative of Perry's fixed determination to fight. With an armament composed chiefly of carronades, in surrendering the weather-gauge to a squadron having a preponderance of long guns, he gave up the ability, in a great measure, to choose the distance at which he would fight the enemy, which, with such relative armaments, was an advantage of no slight importance. Still he was aware that, with an enemy so gallantly seeking an encounter, the lee-gauge had also its advantages. It would have enabled him, while the enemy was bearing down, to rake him for a period more or less long, according to the strength of the breeze, with his whole broadsides, while the enemy would only be able to assail him from his bow-chasers; it would have enabled him, moreover, to form his squadron in a compact line, so essential to such a mixed force, and await the necessarily more disordered attack of the enemy. The lee-gauge, too, would have afforded great facility for relieving disabled vessels, by permitting them to drop under cover of the line, or might have enabled the whole squadron, if worsted in a first encounter, to run to leeward, form a fresh line of battle, and engage a second time with increased chances of success.

At ten o'clock the Lawrence was cleared for action,

shot collected in the racks and in circular grummets of rope, pistols and cutlasses brought by the boarders to quarters, preveater braces rove, matches lit, and the decks wet and sanded, to prevent the explosion of scattering powder, and create a secure foothold amid the approaching carnage. At this hour the enemy, having lost all hope of obtaining the weather-gauge by manœuvring, and observing our squadron coming out, hove to in line of battle on the larboard tack, with the heads of his vessels to the southward and westward. The wind continued light from southeast, enabling the vessels to advance at the rate of near three knots an hour; the weather was serene, and the lake perfectly still. There had been a slight rain in the morning; but, with the shift of wind, the clouds had blown away, and the day assumed all the splendour of our early autumn. The British vessels were freshly painted and in high condition; being hove to in close order, with the morning sun shining upon their broadsides, and their red ensigns gently unfolding to the breeze, they made a very gallant appearance as our squadron bore down to engage them, with the wind on the larboard quarter. It was now discovered that Barclay had formed his line with the Chippeway, of one long eighteen on a pivot, in the van; the Detroit, of nineteen guns, second in the line; the Hunter, of ten guns, third; the Queen Charlotte, of seventeen guns, fourth; the Lady Prevost, of thirteen guns, fifth; and the Little Belt, of three guns, sixth. Captain Perry now remodeled his line of battle, so as to bring his heaviest vessels opposite to their, designated antagonists. Claiming for himself the most formidable antagonist, he passed ahead of the Niagara so as to

encounter the Detroit, and stationed the Scorpion, of two long guns, ahead, and the Ariel, of four short twelves, on his weather bow, where, with her light battery, and having, like the other small vessels, no bulwarks, she might be partially under cover. The Caledonia, of three long twenty-fours, came next, to encounter the Hunter; the Niagara next, so as to be opposite her designated antagonist, the Queen Charlotte; and the Somers, of two long thirty-twos, the Porcupine, of one long thirty-two, Tigress, of one long twenty-four, and Trippé, of one long thirty-two, in succession towards the rear, to encounter the Lady Prevost and Little Belt. The line being formed, Perry now bore up for the enemy, distant at ten o'clock about six miles. He now produced the lettered burgee which, at the last assembly of his commanders to receive their instructions, he had exhibited as the concerted signal for battle. Having unfurled it, he mounted on a gun-slide, and, calling his crew about him, thus briefly addressed them: "My brave lads! this flag contains the last words of Captain Lawrence! Shall I hoist it?" "Ay! ay! sir!" resounded from every voice in the ship, and the flag was briskly swayed to the main royal masthead of the Lawrence. The encouragement of these few brief words, and, still more, the mild and cheerful smile with which they were uttered; the habitual expression of his countenance, which gave such a winning fascination to his manners, imparted a rare spirit and alacrity to the crew; they responded to their young and beloved commander's appeal with three hearty and enthusiastic cheers, which, as the battle-flag unfolded and became visible to the crews of the other vessels, were responded to

enthusiastically throughout the line. In this moment of heroic excitement, all the sick that were capable of motion came on deck to offer their feeble services in defence of their country; not a little excited thereto by the reflection that their young commander, reduced, like themselves, by a wasting disease, and hardly recovered, was standing bravely at his post.

As the ordinary mealtime was certain to find them engaged, the noonday grog was now served, and the bread-bags freely resorted to; after which all repaired once more to their quarters. Perry now went round the deck carefully examining his battery gun by gun, to see that everything was in ample order, stopping at each and exchanging words with the captain. For all he had some pleasant joke, some expression of encouragement. Seeing some of the Constitution's, he said to them, "Well, boys! are you ready?" "All ready, your honour!" was the brief reply, with a general touch of the hat or the handkerchief which some of the old-salts had substituted for their more cumbersome trucks. "But I need not say anything to you," he added; "you know how to beat those fellows." Passing on, he exclaimed, with a smile of recognition, "Ah! here are the Newport boys! *they* will do their duty, I warrant!"

A dead silence of an hour and a half succeeded, during which our squadron continued slowly to approach the enemy, steering for the head of his line on a course forming about half a right angle with it, the headmost vessels under easy sail, the others with everything set. Every preparation for battle had been long since made. The interval of inactivity, so trying to the warrior, was passed in silence, or in low and

brief requests, among officers and men, to render to each other, in case of death, some office of friendship, the survivor to take charge of the effects of the deceased, or to break to his relations the news of their bereavement. Perry gave Mr. Hambleton, who stood near him in charge of the after guns, directions how to act with regard to his private affairs in the event of his death. He leaded his public papers in readiness to be thrown overboard, and destroyed his private ones. "It appeared," says Mr. Hambleton, "to go hard with him to part with his wife's letters. After giving them a hasty reading, he tore them to ribands, observing that, let what would happen, the enemy should not read them, and closed by remarking, 'this is the most important day of my life.'

The suspense, though long, had its end. Suddenly a bugle was heard to sound on board the Detroit, the signal for loud and concerted cheers throughout the British squadron. Soon after, being a quarter before meridian, the enemy's flag ship Detroit, then distant about a mile and a half, commenced the action by firing a single shot at the Lawrence, which did not take effect. Signal was now made for each vessel to engage her opponent, as designated in previous orders. At this time the Ariel, Scorpion, Lawrence, Caledonia, and Niagara were all in their respective stations, in the order they are named, distant from each other about half a cable's length. The other vessels, not sailing quite so well, were a little out of their stations astern. In addition to the inferiority of our force, we had a serious disadvantage from its being broken up into greater numbers. The line of battle prescribed half a cable's length for the distance

of the vessels from each other, the least, probably, that could have been adopted. Hence, having three more vessels than the enemy, our line necessarily over-spread his not less than one thousand feet. Thus, besides all the other disadvantages of the inferior size of our vessels, the enemy could bring to bear upon them a heavier battery in a smaller space, and thus, being stronger at any given point, had a greater superiority even than his nominal one.

The second shot from a long gun of the Detroit, five minutes later than the first, took effect on the Lawrence as she fanned down towards the enemy, passing through both bulwarks, when fire was also opened from the long guns of all the British squadron, which, as they lay drawn up in line of battle, did not materially differ in distance from the Lawrence and the two schooners on her weather bow. At five minutes before meridian, the Lawrence, beginning to suffer considerably from the enemy's fire, returned it from her long twelve pounder, when the schooners on the weather bow, being ordered by trumpet to commence the action, and the Caledonia and Niagara astern, likewise opened their fire with their long guns. The sternmost vessels soon after opened also, but at too great a distance to do much injury.

Owing to the superiority of the enemy in long guns—the entire armament of the Detroit, with the exception of two carronades, being of this description—this cannonade was greatly to the disadvantage of the Lawrence, against which the British fire was chiefly directed. In order to hasten the moment when his carronades would take effect, and enable him to return more fully the fire of the enemy, Perry now

made all sail again, and ordered the word to be passed by trumpet for the vessels astern to close up and take their stations. The order was responded to and transmitted along the line by Captain Elliott, of the Niagara, whose vessel was stationed next but one astern of the Lawrence, and was therefore, at the commencement of the action, quite near the commodore, and in a position to accompany him in closing with the enemy. The Niagara did not, however, make sail with the Lawrence, and accompany her down into close action, but continued at long shots, using only her long twelve-pounder.

Meantime, the Lawrence fanned slowly down towards the enemy, suffering terribly. At meridian, supposing himself within range of the carronades, he luffed up and fired the first division on the starboard side. Discovering that his shot did not tell, he bore away again, and continued steadily to approach the enemy until a quarter past meridian, when he opened his whole starboard broadside, and still continued to approach until within about three hundred and fifty yards, when he hauled up on a course parallel to that of the enemy, and opened a rapid and most destructive fire on the Detroit. So steady had been the approach of the Lawrence in bearing down, and so unwavering the purpose of her commander, that the enemy had apprehended an intention to board. Captain Perry's only object had been to get the enemy within effective reach of his carronades, who hitherto had derived great advantage from his superiority in long guns; and a half hour of almost unresisted cannonade upon the Lawrence, from twenty long guns which the British squadron showed on one side in

battery, caused great carnage and destruction on board of her.

Nevertheless the action was now commenced from her with spirit and effect; and, notwithstanding the overpowering odds with which she was assailed, the whole battery of the enemy, amounting, in all, to thirty-four guns, being almost entirely directed against her, she continued to assail the enemy with steady and unwavering effort. In this unequal contest she was nobly sustained by the Scorpion and Ariel on her weather bow, which, being but slightly noticed by the enemy or injured by his shot, were enabled to direct their fire upon him with sure aim and without interruption. The commander of the Caledonia, animated by the same gallant spirit and sense of duty, followed the Lawrence into close action, and closed with her antagonist, the Hunter; but the Niagara, which, when the battle began, had been within hail of the Lawrence, did not follow her down towards the enemy's line so as to encounter her antagonist, the Queen Charlotte. She had not made sail when the Lawrence did; but got embarrassed with the Caledonia, instead of passing astern and to leeward of her to close with the Queen Charlotte, which was next to the Hunter. Captain Elliott hailed the Caledonia, and ordered Lieutenant D. Turner to bear up and make room for him to pass. Though this officer was in the station assigned to him astern of the Lawrence, and pressing down to engage his antagonist, the brig Hunter, yet he obeyed the order of his superior, without stopping to inquire whether that superior, as a subordinate like himself, had a right to give an order involving a change in the order of

battle. Lieutenant Turner at once put his helm up, and made room for the Niagara by bearing down towards the enemy. Captain Elliott did not, however, follow in the Niagara, but sheered to windward, and, by brailing up his jib and backing his main topsail, balanced the efforts of his sails so as to keep his vessel stationary, and prevent her approaching the enemy. The Niagara did not, therefore, approach the enemy's line near enough to use her carronades, but remained at long shots, firing only her long twelve-pounder, doing little injury, and receiving less from casual shots aimed at the Lawrence and Caledonia, of which she was partially under cover.

At half past twelve, the Queen Charlotte, finding that she could not, with her light guns, engage her expected antagonist, the Niagara, on account of her distance off, filled her main topsail, and, passing the Hunter, closed up astern of the Detroit, and opened her fire at closer quarters upon the Lawrence. In this unequal contest, the Lawrence continued to struggle desperately against such overpowering numbers. The first division of the starboard guns was directed against the Detroit, and the second against the Queen Charlotte, with an occasional shot from her after gun at the Hunter, which lay on her quarter, and with which the Caledonia continued to sustain a hot though unequal engagement. The Scorpion and Ariel, from their stations on the weather bow of the Lawrence, made every effort that their inconsiderable force allowed. The Niagara had taken a station, as we have seen, which prevented her from firing, except with her long gun, on the sternmost of the enemy's vessels. The small vessels at the rear of our own line were too

remote to do more than keep up a distant cannonade with the nearest vessels of the enemy.

Overwhelming as was the superiority of the force directed against the Lawrence, being in the ratio of thirty-four guns to her ten in battery, she continued, with the aid of the Scorpion, Ariel, and Caledonia, to sustain the contest for more than two hours, her fire being kept up with uninterrupted spirit, so long as her guns continued mounted and in order. Never was the advantage of thorough training at the guns more exemplified than in the case of the Lawrence. The surgeon remarks that he could discover no perceptible difference in the rapidity of the firing of the guns over his head during the action; throughout, the actual firing seemed as rapid as in exercise before the battle. By this time, however, her rigging had been much shot away, and was hanging down or towing overboard, sails torn to pieces, spars wounded and falling upon deck, braces and bowlines cut, so as to render it impossible to trim the yards or keep the vessel under control. Such was the condition of the vessel aloft; on deck the destruction was even more terrible. One by one the guns were dismounted, until only one remained that could be fired; the bulwarks were so entirely beaten in that the enemy's round shot passed completely through. The slaughter was dreadful, beyond anything recorded in naval history. Of one hundred well men who had gone into action, twenty-two were killed and sixty-one wounded. The killed were hastily removed out of the way of the guns, and the wounded passed below and crowded together on the berth-deck. It was impossible for Doctor Parsons, the assistant surgeon of the Lawrence, the only

medical officer who was in health to perform duty in the squadron, to attend to such a press of wounded; bleeding arteries were hastily secured, shattered limbs supported by splints; and those that were nearly severed by cannon-balls hastily removed. Owing to the shallowness of these vessels, the wounded were necessarily all above the water-line, and exposed to be again struck by cannon-balls passing through the vessel's side; thus, midshipman Laub, while moving away from the surgeon, with a tourniquet on his arm, to resume his duties upon deck, was struck by a cannon-ball, which traversed his chest; and a Narraganset Indian, named Charles Poughigh, was killed in like manner by a cannon-ball after his leg had been taken off. Perry had a favourite spaniel on board the Lawrence, which had been left in a state-room below to be out of the way. The confinement, the noise, and the groans of the wounded, terrified the poor animal, and at each discharge it growled and barked with affected rage, or howled most piteously. In the course of the action, a shot passed through the bulk-head and left a large hole, through which the dog immediately thrust its head, yelping terribly for release. Its strange manœuvres were too much for the gravity even of the suffering wounded, and some of them broke forth into loud and intemperate laughter. Meantime Perry continued to keep up a fire from his single remaining carronade, though to man it he was obliged to send repeated requests to the surgeon to spare him another hand from those engaged in removing the wounded, until the last had been taken. It is recorded by the surgeon, that when these messages arrived, several of the wounded crawled upon deck

to lend a feeble aid at the guns. At length the commander's own personal aid, with that of the purser, Mr. Hambleton, and chaplain, Mr. Breese, was necessary to fire this sole remaining gun, and it, too, was at last disabled.

The conduct of Perry throughout this trying scene was such as to inspire the most unbounded confidence in his followers, and to sustain throughout their courage and enthusiasm. Free from irritation and undue excitability, the necessary orders were given with precision, and obeyed with steady alacrity. Undismayed amid the surrounding carnage, calm, collected, and even cheerful, his eye became the rallying-point to which those of his followers reverted after each new disaster, and received from its electric flash a kindred encouragement. After the fearful havoc which would occasionally be made among a gun's crew by a single round shot, or a stand of grape or canister, the survivors would for a moment turn to Perry, exchange a glance with him, and step into the places of their comrades. Those that lay weltering on the deck, some in the agony of expiring nature, would contrive to get their faces towards him, and, fixing their eye upon his, seem to seek, as an only reward for that life's blood which was ebbing away in the cause of their country, an assurance that they had done their duty. They seemed to die cheerfully in the consciousness that, if they had fallen, his more important life was still spared to secure the triumph of their country.

The humane heart of the commander could not yield to the painful feelings which this spectacle, under other circumstances, would have rendered overpowering. The animating sense of the responsibility that

weighed upon him, and confidence in his own resources, enabled him to maintain his cheerfulness. In the hottest of the fight, Yarnall, the first lieutenant, came to Perry, and told him that the officers in the first division under his command were all killed or disabled. Yarnall had received a wound in the forehead and another in the neck, from which the blood flowed profusely over his face and person, while his nose, which had been struck by a splinter, was swollen to a most portentous size. Perry, after expressing some good-humoured astonishment at his tragi-comical appearance, sent him the required aid; but soon after he returned with the same complaint of a destruction of his officers, to which he replied, "You must endeavour to make out by yourself; I have no more to furnish you." In addition to the other oddities of Yarnall's appearance, some of the hammocks were struck in the nettings, and the contents of the mattresses, chiefly stuffed with the down of flag-tops or cat-tails, were distributed in the air, having much the appearance of falling snow. This substance, lighting on Yarnall's face and adhering to the blood, gave it, as Dr. Parsons describes it, the appearance of a huge owl. When he went below at the close of the action, even the wounded were moved to merriment by his ludicrous appearance, and one of them exclaimed, "The devil has come for his own."

Another incident is characteristic of the calm cheerfulness of Perry and of his officers. Dulany Forrest, the second lieutenant, was standing immediately beside Perry, attending to his division, when a grape-shot struck him in the breast, and he fell upon the deck. Perry raised him up, and, observing no appearance of

injury—for the shot had spent its force—uttered some cheering assurance to Forrest that he could not be hurt. The lieutenant, who had only been stunned, presently became conscious; and, pulling out the shot, which had lodged in the bosom of his waistcoat, put it quietly in his pocket, replying, “No, sir, I am not hurt, but this is my shot!” Several cases occurred, during this scene of carnage, in which men were shot down while in the act of speaking to the commander. One of these was that of a captain of a gun, which was somewhat out of order, whom Perry had approached to offer assistance. The sailor, who was a noble-looking fellow, being one of the “Constitution’s,” was in the act of drawing himself up, with a fine, sailor-like air, to fire, when a twenty-four pound shot passed through his body, and he fell without a groan at the feet of his commander.

Another incident no less painfully illustrates the carnage which occurred on the deck of the Lawrence, and the destruction by which her commander was so closely surrounded. The command of the marines of the Lawrence was intrusted to Lieutenant John Brooks, a gay, amiable, and intelligent young officer, whose numerous good qualities were enhanced in their effects by the rarest personal beauty. He was addressing Perry with a smile, and in an animated tone, with regard to the battle, when a cannon ball struck him in the thigh, shattering him in the most horrible manner, and carrying him to the other side of the deck. The sudden torment of his wound wrung from him piercing cries. He implored his commander to relieve him from pain too great for endurance by shooting him dead. Perry ordered some of the marines

to take him below. Ere this could be effected, a mulatto boy, only twelve years old, who was Brooks's servant, came with a cartridge to a neighbouring gun, and, seeing Brooks down, threw himself on the deck with frantic cries, exclaiming that his master was killed. When Brooks was taken below, he returned sobbing to his duty. One occurrence for a moment during the action disturbed the settled equanimity of Perry. He beheld his young brother, then but twelve years old, who had already, during the action, received two musket balls through his hat, and had his clothes torn by splinters, suddenly struck down at his side by a hammock torn from the nettings by a cannon ball. Fortunately, the shot itself had missed him. He was only stunned; and, in a few moments, his anxious brother had the satisfaction of seeing him return to his duty.

At length, about half past two, when the last gun of the Lawrence had become disabled and unfit for farther use—when, of all his crew, Captain Perry could only find throughout his vessel eighteen persons, besides his little brother and himself, undamaged by wounds—it became evident to him that he must have recourse to other means within his command in order to win the battle. Repeatedly during the engagement, Mr. Taylor, whose duty as sailing-master placed him beside the commander, to manœuvre the Lawrence under his orders, had asked Perry if he observed the conduct of the Niagara, which was lying far to windward, out of reach of the Queen Charlotte, her antagonist, and the very different conduct of the little Caledonia, which had so gallantly borne down to relieve the Lawrence from the enemy's fire. Similar remarks

were made among themselves by the officers and crew. The wounded, as they went below, and were asked for news of how the day was going, each had the same tale to relate of the Niagara keeping aloof and failing to relieve the Lawrence from the fire of the Queen Charlotte. As, then, the last gun of the Lawrence became useless, and the ship, now an unmanageable wreck, was beginning to drop astern, Captain Perry was looking around, as the smoke cleared away, to estimate the real condition of his resources, when Lieutenant Forrest again called his attention to the strange manœuvres of the Niagara, at this time on the larboard beam of the Lawrence, directly opposite to the enemy, while the Caledonia was passing the starboard beam between the Lawrence and the enemy. "That brig," said Forrest, "will not help us; see how he keeps off, he will not come to close action." "I'll fetch him up," was the commodore's reply; and he immediately ordered his boat. He remarked that the Niagara did not appear to be much injured, and that the American flag should not be hauled down from over his head on that day. Giving Mr. Yarnall command of the Lawrence, Perry stepped down the larboard gangway into his boat, telling his officers, as he shoved off, with the prophetic confidence of a hero conscious of his powers, "If a victory is to be gained, I'll gain it!"

At half past two, when Perry left the Lawrence, the Niagara was passing her weather or larboard beam at the distance of nearly half a mile. The breeze had freshened, her main topsail was filled, and she was passing the British squadron rapidly. Elated with the prospect of getting on board of this fresh vessel, and trying his prowess upon the host of enemies, whose

efficiency his previous desperate resistance had essentially diminished, he went off in gallant style and full of ardour from the Lawrence, standing erect in his boat, and urging his crew to give way cheerily. The enemy, observing this movement, quickly penetrated his design; and apprehending the consequences of the Niagara, then entirely fresh, passing under the immediate command of the superior officer, who had fought the Lawrence with such skill and obstinacy against the whole British squadron for more than two hours and a half, they immediately directed a fire of great guns and musketry at his boat, and exerted all their energies to destroy it. Several of the oars were splintered, the boat was traversed by musket balls, and the crew covered with spray from the round shot and grape that were striking the water on every side. Perry, unconscious or unmindful of the danger, continued to stand erect, until his brave crew implored him not to expose himself; and, losing for a moment their sense of subordination in sympathy for his danger and anxiety for the periled glory of their country, threatened to lay upon their oar unless he sat down. Thus entreated, he yielded to their wishes; and they gave way with a hearty good-will: The breeze had now freshened, and the Niagara, having set her fore-sail, was ranging rapidly past the enemy, in a direction which would soon have carried her entirely out of the action. With all the exertions of the boat's crew, nearly fifteen minutes were passed in reaching the Niagara.

By none of the squadron was this critical movement so anxiously watched as by the fourteen brave fellows who alone remained unhurt of the officers and

crew of the Lawrence; the life of their beloved commander, tenfold endeared to them by their recent observance of his heroism; the fate of the day; the glory of their country; and their own condition as prisoners or victors, all dependant on that life, wrought their feelings to the most intense and painful sympathy. Powerless to do anything for their own protection or for the farther annoyance of the enemy, they clustered along the weather bulwarks of the Lawrence, and watched each dip of the oars that were carrying Perry along at a rate which seemed slow to their impatience; each ball that seemed destined to destroy him would have been more welcome to themselves. But he moved on unscathed, as amid the wreck of the Lawrence. And now they see him cross the gangway of the Niagara, and their joy bursts forth in enthusiastic cheers.

The feelings of the few survivors and wounded of the Lawrence were thus relieved from a painful solicitude amounting to agony. They felt that all was now safe, and that they had not fought, nor their less fortunate shipmates bled and died in vain. While this crisis had absorbed them, the brig, with her colours still flying, had continued to be a principal object for the enemy's fire. It became the duty of Lieutenant Yarnall, as commander, to spare the farther destruction of the brave fellows intrusted to him, and the frightful slaughter of the wounded below. He had a brief consultation with the second lieutenant, Dulany Forrest, and Sailing-master W. V. Taylor, and, with their concurrence, determined to surrender. It may be here remarked that all three of these officers were wounded, though continuing at their posts. The colours were therefore hauled down. Their descent

was greeted by cheers from all the British vessels, the crews of which appeared exultingly on their weather bulwarks, waving triumphant defiance at their enemies. But the hope was delusive. The first act was over, and its close had imparted to the British an unsubstantial encouragement; the second was to terminate in a catastrophe not less brilliant than they might have anticipated, but far different. On the berth-deck of the Lawrence, the explanation of the British cheers by the surrender of their vessel had filled the hearts of the wounded, with which the deck was literally covered, with the deepest despondency. The assistance of the humane and indefatigable young surgeon was rejected, and scarcely any exclamations met his ear but "Sink the ship! Let us all sink together!" Such is the desire to conquer, such the heroism of Americans, when trained and inspired by a hero. It was in the midst of this despondency that the chivalrous young Brooks, whose life-blood had been fast ebbing away, breathed forth a spirit worthy of the fair temple in which it was enshrined. Mr. Samuel Hambleton, purser of the Lawrence, who had preferred a post of danger on deck to the usual station of his grade in charge of passing powder below, had received a severe wound in the shoulder, by which it was completely shattered; while working by the side of his noble commander, like a common sailor, at the last gun. For want of space in the wardroom, Hambleton was laid on the same mattress with Brooks, face to face with his dying messmate and friend. The intense suffering which had impelled him, in the first moment of being struck, to ask for death at the hand of his commander, had passed away, and

he lay calmly expecting his end. Never before had Hambleton been so much impressed with his surpassing beauty. While the fever from his wound had imparted a surprising lustre to his ordinarily radiant countenance, its expression gave the idea of a spirit sublimed by approaching release from the burden of mortality. The glory of his country, the welfare of his friends—feelings worthy of angels—were still uppermost in his thought. He inquired, with earnest solicitude, how the battle went, and as to the fate of Perry. The Lawrence had surrendered; but Perry had reached the Niagara, to bring her up to take her share in the battle, which, earlier taken, might have spared so many lives. Brooks briefly directed the disposition of his affairs, the messages to be sent to his father and friends, and commended his faithful mulatto boy to their protection and kindness. While he was yet speaking in a failing tone, Hambleton's attention was diverted by favourable news from deck, and the tumultuous excitement of joy which it occasioned among the wounded. When he turned to communicate it to Brooks, his spirit had departed.

But the enemy had other employment than to take possession of the surrendered Lawrence. As Perry reached the deck of the Niagara, he was met at the gangway by Captain Elliott, who "inquired how the day was going. Captain Perry replied, badly: that he had lost almost all of his men, and that his ship was a wreck; and asked what the gunboats were doing so far astern. Captain Elliott offered to go and bring them up; and, Captain Perry consenting, he sprung into the boat and went off on that duty."

Perry's first order on board the Niagara was to

back the main topsail, and stop her from running out of the action; his next, to brail up the main trysail, put the helm up, and bear down before the wind, with squared yards, for the enemy, altering the course from that which Captain Elliott had been steering a whole right angle; at the same time, he set top-gallant-sails, and hove out the signal for close action. As the answering pendants were displayed along the line, the order was greeted by hearty cheers, evincive of the admiration awakened throughout the squadron by the hardy manœuvre of the Niagara, and of renewed confidence of victory. By great efforts, Lieutenant Holdup Stevens, who had been astern of the line in the Trippe, soon closed up to the assistance of the Caledonia, and the remaining vessels approached rapidly, to take a more active part in the battle, under the influence of the increasing breeze.

The helm had been put up on board the Niagara, sail made, and the signal for close action hove out at forty-five minutes after two, the instant after Perry had boarded her. With the increased breeze, seven or eight minutes sufficed to traverse the distance of more than half a mile which still separated the Niagara from the enemy. As the enemy beheld her coming boldly down, reserving her fire until it could be delivered with terrible effect, they poured theirs in upon her in a raking position, and the Detroit made an effort to wear in order to present her starboard broadside to the Niagara, several of the larboard guns being disabled. As this evolution commenced on board the Detroit, the Queen Charlotte was running up under her lee. The evolution of wearing, which should properly have commenced with the sternmost

and leewardmost vessel, not having been imitated with sufficient quickness by the Queen, the consequence was, that the latter ran her bowsprit and head booms into the mizzen rigging of the Detroit, and the two British ships got foul of each other, and continued in this unfortunate predicament, when the Niagara, having shortened sail to check her velocity, passed slowly under the bows of the Detroit, within half pistol-shot, and poured into both vessels, as they lay entangled, a deadly and awfully destructive fire of grape and canister; the larboard guns, which were likewise manned, were directed with equally murderous effect into the sterns of the Lady Prevost, which had passed to the head of the line, and the Little Belt; the marines, at the same time, cleared their decks of every one to be seen above the rails. The piercing shrieks of the mortally wounded on every side showed how terrific had been the carnage. Passing under the lee of the two British ships, which had now got clear, but were but slightly separated, Captain Perry, brought by the wind on the starboard tack, with his head to the northward and eastward, and backing the Niagara's main topsail to deaden her headway, continued to pour his starboard broadside into the Queen Charlotte and the Hunter, which lay astern of her. Some of his shots passed through the Queen Charlotte's ports into the Detroit. At this juncture the small vessels also came into close action to windward, and poured in a destructive fire of grape and canister; their shot and that of the Niagara, whenever it missed its mark, passing the enemy, and taking effect reciprocally on our own vessels.

All resistance now ceased; an officer appeared on

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the taffrail of the Queen, to signify that she had struck; and her example was immediately followed by the Detroit. Both vessels struck in about seven minutes after the Niagara opened this most destructive fire, and about fifteen minutes after Perry took command of her. The Hunter struck at the same time, as did the Lady Prevost, which lay to leeward under the guns of the Niagara.

The battle had begun on the part of the enemy at a quarter before meridian; at three the Queen Charlotte and Detroit surrendered, and all resistance was at an end. As the cannonade ceased and the smoke blew over, the two squadrons, now owning one master, were found completely mingled. The shattered Lawrence, whose condition sufficiently attested where had been the brunt and burden of the day, lay to windward, a tattered and helpless wreck, with the flag of liberty once more flying over her; the Niagara, with the signal for close action still set, lay close under the lee of the Detroit, Queen Charlotte, and Hunter; the Caledonia, Scorpion, and Trippe, which had gallantly followed the Niagara through the enemy's line, had taken a position to leeward very favourable for preventing the enemy's escape. As the smoke passed to leeward, the Chippeway and Little Belt were discovered bearing up towards Malden under a press of sail. The Scorpion and Trippe went immediately in pursuit, and, after a few shots, compelled them to surrender.

And now began the proud yet melancholy task of taking possession of the enemy's ships. On boarding the Detroit, the officer sent from the Niagara found her in a condition only less pitiable than the Lawrence had been left in by Perry; her gaff and mizzen topmast

hanging over the taffrail and quarter; her masts and yards badly wounded; all her braces shot away, not a single stay standing forward, and her stout oak bulwarks very much shattered. Many of the thirty-two pound shots were sticking in her side; they had been fired from the carronades before the Lawrence had got to close quarters. On deck the destruction and carnage had been terrible; many of the guns were dismounted, and the deck was strewed with the killed and wounded, and slippery with blood. The deck was found nearly deserted of officers and men, and in charge of the second lieutenant, Mr. Inglis, the first lieutenant having been killed towards the middle of the action, and Commodore Barclay having been most dangerously wounded somewhat earlier by a grape shot in the thigh. This heroic officer, after having been carried below and placed in the hands of the surgeon, made use of the first moment of returning consciousness to cause himself to be again borne upon deck. When the Niagara bore down and delivered her raking fire, he received a second grape shot in the right shoulder, which, entering below the joint, broke the blade to pieces, and left a large and dreadful wound. It is said that when, towards the close of the action, a message was sent down to this heroic officer that the day was lost, he caused himself to be carried once more on deck, to convince himself that farther resistance was impossible and would be unavailing.

The other British vessels were found to be also much cut to pieces, especially the Queen Charlotte, which had lost her brave commander, Captain Finnis, very early in the action; her first lieutenant had been soon after mortally wounded, and the loss of life on

board of her was very severe; she was also much cut to pieces both in hull and spars. The other vessels suffered in like proportion; the Lady Prevost had both her commander and first lieutenant wounded, and, besides other extensive injury, was become unmanageable from the loss of her rudder; Lieutenants Bignal, commanding the Hunter, and Campbell, the Chipeway, were also wounded; thus leaving only the commander of the Little Belt fit for duty at the close of the action. Indeed, in the official account of Commodore Barclay, it is stated that every commander, and every officer second in command, was disabled. The total of killed and wounded rendered by Commodore Barclay in his official report were forty-one killed, including three officers, and ninety-four wounded, nine of whom were officers. The returns, on account of the condition of the commanders and their seconds in command, could not have been very complete, and the numbers of killed and wounded are believed to have been greater. The killed of the British squadron were thrown overboard as they fell, with the exception of the officers.

The feeling which the spectacle of these prizes awakened in the minds of the victors had in it as much of sorrow as of exultation. The ruined and tattered condition of that squadron, which, three short hours before, had presented itself in such proud array, beginning the action, and hurling death and defiance at those who, with inferior force, had ventured to brave the power of England; and, still more, the spectacle of bloodshed and agony which they everywhere presented within, after the excitement of battle was over, could not but overwhelm the mind with gloom, and

make way once more for the indulgence of those humane sympathies which had been smothered in the strife of conflict. Nor did our own ships fail to exhibit scenes well suited to harrow the feelings; the Lawrence especially presented an awful spectacle. As has been already stated, twenty-two of her crew were killed and sixty-one wounded, making an aggregate of slaughter which is believed never to have been surpassed in any modern naval combat, unless where the conquered vessel has sunk with her whole crew. The Niagara lost two killed and twenty-three wounded; all but two of the wounded having been struck after Captain Perry took command of her, as stated by the surgeon who attended them. Three were wounded on board of the Caledonia; two on board the Somers; one killed and three wounded on board the Ariel; two killed on board the Scorpion; and two wounded on board the Trippe; making an aggregate in the whole squadron of twenty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded. Among our killed we had to mourn the loss of Lieutenant John Brooks and Midshipman Laub on board the Lawrence; and of Midshipman John Clark on board the Scorpion. Lieutenants Yarnall and Forrest, Sailing-master Taylor, Purser Hambleton, Midshipman Swartout and Claxton, and Mr. Stone, carpenter, were wounded on board the Lawrence, and Lieutenant Edwards and Midshipman Cummings were wounded on board the Niagara. Two of the schooners, the Tigress and Porcupine, had no casualties whatever; and as the Trippe and Somers had each but two wounded, it shows that, notwithstanding the great efforts made by their commanders to close up, they were unable to take an important

part in the battle until just before the enemy struck. The Trippe, though originally the last in the line, from her superior sailing, and the great exertions of her commander, Lieutenant Holdup Stevens, was the first of the four sternmost vessels to get into close action. From the enemy's awaiting the attack in a compact line of battle, his vessels were all equally available from the first; and, accordingly, the destruction on board of them, from their want of bulwarks, was more severe than in his heavy vessels. Hence, in addition to the actual inferiority of our force, the disparity was farther increased during the action by its being fought by the whole of the British force, and only a part of ours.

The splendour of this victory dazzles the imagination. It was gained by a portion of an inferior squadron over another every way superior, and throughout the action concentrated in its force. It was gained, more eminently than any other naval victory, by the exertions of one individual, a young man of twenty-seven, who had never beheld a naval engagement. He had dashed boldly into action with the Lawrence, counting upon the support of those immediately around him, and trusting that the rear of his line would soon be able to close up to his support. Deserted by the Niagara, which was to have encountered the second of the enemy's ships, and sustained only by the Caledonia, the Ariel, and the Scorpion, we find him resisting for more than two hours the whole of the British squadron. Finding, at length, his vessel cut to pieces, his guns dismounted, means of resistance destroyed, and nearly the whole of his brave crew lying dead or wounded around him, instead of yielding the day,

after having done everything that depended upon him to win it, and leaving the responsibility of defeat to the commander of the Niagara, he thought only of using the means that remained to him still to secure a victory. Passing from the Lawrence under the enemy's fire; saved from death, as if miraculously, by the protecting genius of his country, he reached the Niagara, and, by an evolution unsurpassed for genius and hardihood, bore down upon the enemy, and dashed with his fresh and uninjured vessel through the enemy's line. It was thus that the battle of Erie was won, not merely by the genius and inspiration, but eminently by the exertions of one man. Nelson was indeed a splendid hero, the subject, in no slight degree, of Perry's admiration. But it may with truth be said, that no one of his many brilliant victories was opposed by so many difficulties, or effected by so many resources of genius. They were usually effected by single combined movements in execution of previously-concerted plans. Nelson would go into action at the head of his line, be gallantly supported by his subordinate chiefs, and the steady display of British courage and superior skill would give him the victory. In Perry's victory, the original intention of engaging the enemy in line, vessel to vessel, as designated in previous orders, had failed, from the Niagara keeping back and abstaining from the encounter of her proper antagonist, which was thus left free to aid in overpowering the Lawrence. In suffering destruction, she had fought with desperate obstinacy, and dealt many and formidable blows to her numerous assailants. Overcome at last and abandoned to her fate, Perry made a new arrangement of his remaining resources, and

snatched from the enemy a victory which he had already claimed with exulting cheers for his own. Nelson had triumphed over Frenchmen and Spaniards; Perry was called upon to meet the conquerors of these, led, moreover, by a veteran formed in the school of Nelson, and bearing upon his person the marks of Nelson's greatest victory. The battle of Trafalgar was won by the whole British fleet over a part of that of the allies; the battle of Lake Erie was won over the whole British squadron by only a part of ours.

Let us now follow the movements of Perry subsequent to the victory. After the enemy's colours had been hauled down, and provision had been made for officering and manning the prizes, confining the prisoners, securing the wounded masts, stopping shot-holes, and the combined squadron had been hauled by the wind on the starboard tack, he retired to the cabin to communicate briefly to General Harrison intelligence of an event which was to admit of the immediate advance of his army, and rescue our territory from the savage warfare which the surrender of Hull's army and subsequent disasters had entailed on it. The letter which he wrote, though short, was ample, since it expressed all that was necessary to be known.

"DEAR GENERAL,

"We have met the enemy, and they are ours. Two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop. Yours, with very great respect and esteem,

"O. H. PERRY."

He also wrote the following letter to the secretary of the navy, which was forwarded by the same express.

U. S. brig Niagara, off the westernmost Sister, }
head of Lake Erie, Sept. 10, 1813, 4 p. m. }

“SIR,

“It has pleased the Almighty to give to the arms of the United States a signal victory over their enemies on this lake. The British squadron, consisting of two ships, two brigs, one schooner, and one sloop, have this moment surrendered to the force under my command, after a sharp conflict.

“I have the honour to be, sir, very respectfully,
your obedient servant,

“O. H. PERRY.”

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